

*Private Member's Business*

the other. It can be as aggressive in its marketing for the eastern system as it is for the western system.

Tied into this is the whole question of the seaway tolls and the current requirement of 100 per cent cost recovery. We do not have that requirement in air and we do not have that requirement in trucking. We are subsidizing rail, so we obviously do not require it there. When we look at the Seaway tolls I will admit right up front that the amount of money per tonne which goes toward Seaway tolls is minimal. But as Robert Patterson, president of Patterson Steamship Lines, one of the oldest grain shipping companies in this country, has said in the past, "On the seaway we are talking about pennies per tonne. In terms of our flexibility, one or two more pennies will mean the difference between whether or not we move that cargo."

To say to the users of the Seaway: "Thou must pay 100 per cent of the cost of operating" does not reflect the realities of the market-place, nor does it reflect the reality that every time bulk cargo is moved through Thunder Bay, whether it is potash to the United States, coal to Hamilton, grain to Sorel, Quebec City, Baie Comeau or Port Cartier, it is not just Thunder Bay that is benefiting from it, it is Sault Ste. Marie, Welland, Thorold, Toronto, the Quebec ports and Halifax that are benefiting. Jobs are created in those provinces.

In western Canada it is coal from British Columbia and Alberta, it is grain from Saskatchewan and Manitoba and it is potash from Saskatchewan that is moving through the system. The hub, the handling and trans-shipment point is Thunder Bay. It is important for our community. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs in Thunder Bay depend upon the movement of grain and bulk commodities through that port.

The tolls exist because during the lead up in the negotiations between Canada and the United States to construct the Seaway, the American rail lobby, which had blocked such a development for years, only agreed to let it proceed if there would be 100 per cent cost recovery. Do you know why? Because they knew they would be out-competed. It was the Americans who forced Canada to charge 100 per cent of the cost.

Today the United States has eliminated its Seaway tolls. The Americans have put in place a port tax on commodities in all ports throughout the U.S. with the money going into a development fund to operate and build. They rebate those who go through Canadian locks with American products. Even though they are the ones who said Canada must charge 100 per cent, they are not doing that themselves now.

Tolls are a barrier to the introduction of new services. Tolls are another form of tax and act as a detriment to the ongoing viability of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway. The largest population mass in North America lives along the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system and has a very important impact on the economies of both countries. It is up to us as legislators to try to provide solutions to the very real and legitimate concerns about the manner in which the movement of bulk commodities is treated—grain on the one hand in terms of the WGTA and all bulk commodities in terms of the Seaway toll.

We have had a discussion paper called "Growing Together, A Vision for Canada's Agri-food Industry" which has been circulated by the Minister of Agriculture. It is asking for responses. It is asking for ideas. It raises issues. My intention is for this motion to be a catalyst, to provide a focus for discussion that will impact on "Growing Together" because it will have a major impact on our ability to sell the grain that we know we can grow. Some of the best grain in the world, if not the best grain in the world, comes from our prairies.

There is a major crisis in the Seaway. We are losing ships, both to the scrap heap and to the foreign flags. We are losing highly skilled trained workers. Even with the upturn in terms of grain movement this fall, no one has been called back to work in Thunder Bay. What we are seeing, as well as the rail program that I expect will occur, is some employment stability for those few men who have been called back this fall. There will be a whole other group that will not have any work this year and will not be able to qualify for unemployment insurance. They are going elsewhere to find other work and we will lose their talents.

It is not just a question of not having the bottoms to move the grain, we must have the skilled people on the marine side, elevators on the land side and rails to move these products. As a country we will lose because of that.