

### Supply

they do not necessarily think of it as a fishing port. But there are many fishermen in St. John's and I met with them, and indeed I want to say that I am very sympathetic to that project and would like to see it implemented. We in the House cannot always do what we want to do right away. This is a project, though, that I think we should implement and I certainly commit myself to try to get the funds to do it. It was not included in the present allocation, but hopefully it can be included in a future allocation. I certainly support my colleague's efforts in his attempt to get it included.

● (1530)

**Mr. McGrath:** I appreciate the Minister's support and I believe that he is sincere because he himself comes from St. John's and knows whereof I speak. Will he go one step further and make a direct representation to his colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané), to allocate money now when the need is urgent so that our fishermen can at least enjoy some degree of protection, so they will have some place to tie up their boats, some place to handle their fish, things that are not denied to fishermen anywhere else in the Atlantic Provinces? Will he make that direct representation to his colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans?

**Mr. Rompkey:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly undertake to discuss that with my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and I am sure that he will be sympathetic to the project as well. As I say, the money has not been allocated because there is not an unlimited supply of funds that would allow us to do all that we want to do at any one time. But I recognize that this is an important project, it is something that should be done, and I certainly lend my support to it.

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on the motion before the House, especially as it relates to Atlantic Canada and my native Province of Nova Scotia. I would be the first to admit that the income disparity between Atlantic Canada and the rest of the country is slowly closing, but I am sorry to say that we still have a very long way to go.

According to statistics made available last month, real family income in the Atlantic Provinces was still well below the national average last year. While the gap may be closing, the average family income in Nova Scotia listed at \$21,872 was still more than \$5,000 below the national average listed at \$26,748. Families in the remaining Atlantic Provinces fared even worse, and of course this is simply not good enough. Prince Edward Island households trailed the country with average incomes of \$20,666, New Brunswick families averaged \$21,155, and in Newfoundland the figure was \$20,971.

While Nova Scotians can be proud of their showing, it is obvious from the figures I have read in the House that Atlantic Canadians made less than their counterparts in points west. These figures encouraged the Conference Board of Canada to predict that Nova Scotia will be a leader among the other Provinces as they eventually emerge from the current economic recession. In its February report, the Board predicted that

Nova Scotia will experience 2.3 per cent growth in real domestic product this year, second only to Alberta's predicted growth of 2.6 per cent and almost double the 1.2 per cent growth forecast for the country as a whole. The Board attributes the above average growth rate expected for Alberta and Nova Scotia to developments within the mining sector and to the benefits from oil and gas exploration efforts in 1983.

This, Sir, is of course heady stuff. It is what dreams are made of, and all of us hope that these dreams come true. But there is always a little black cloud or two on the horizon. The same Board predicts that Nova Scotia will have a 14.5 per cent unemployment rate this year compared to a national average of something like 13 per cent, while its sister Provinces have much higher projected unemployment rates.

Of course, these are only predictions. Offshore developments including a build up of the necessary infrastructure must, I submit, commence soon if the 1987-88 target for production is to be met. This calls for sending in the \$200 million range for infrastructure alone, and I cannot help but wonder if the federal Government has earmarked these funds in its recent budget so that these developments can go forward as planned.

I regret that the Minister of State for Economic Development (Mr. Johnston) is not now present in the House. Today he announced \$4 million for two projects in South Shore. While I agree that this will be helpful, Sir, it is really only a drop in the bucket when the massive dredging projects that are required throughout the length and breadth of my riding are considered. It is somewhat regrettable that we as Members of the Opposition are not consulted by the Government when it plans for projects of this type within our constituencies, because we could be helpful in earmarking some of these funds which are obviously available.

One of the clouds on the horizon is the concern expressed by business and transportation industry officials over federal moves to reduce or eliminate subsidies on freight shipped within the region or to other Provinces, and I am glad that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) is present in the House because I realize that this is a matter which is very close to his heart. In fact, the Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce and the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission at a joint news conference described as ominous the terms of reference for a planned Transport Department study on regional and westbound rates. In addition to altering the Crowsnest Pass Agreement, which will of course raise the price of feed grain for eastern farmers and place them at an economic disadvantage—

**Mr. Pepin:** That is not true at all.

**Mr. Crouse:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister states that that is not true. I hope he is correct, but I am only repeating to the House, Sir, what farmers have said to me on the telephone. I have not only received telephone calls from people from the South Shore in Nova Scotia, but I have had telephone calls from people from Prince Edward Island as well. He will have to convince them in his own speeches that—