

Marine Atlantic Inc.

moment you are costing a buck, so go slaughter your herds"? There is not a Canadian who would suggest any such thing to the dairy farmers of Quebec and Ontario.

Yet the Deputy Prime Minister's task force report tells us that the ferry services along the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland are costing the horrendous amount of \$25 million. Having discovered that \$25 million was being spent to provide services for half a million Canadians who live 90 miles away from their fellow citizens across a body of water, the Government had a collective cardiac arrest and promptly found the axe-men who wrote this piece of legislation that appeared in December following the recommendation which appeared in September. It makes one wonder.

The cost of the subsidy in Prince Edward Island is substantially less than the cost of the subsidy in Newfoundland, but again, the gun has been brought to the shoulder and the collective eye of the administration has looked down the barrel, the bead has been placed, the target has been identified and the trigger is now being pulled. This Bill is the bullet.

The Government is severing CN Marine from Canadian National because Canadian National appears on television telling Canadians that CN is in business for Canada. Every time I turn on the tube, I hear: "CN, in business for Canada". It is, Mr. Speaker, except in Newfoundland and PEI. That tie is being severed, and a new company is being set up. It will be easier that way to identify how much subsidy the parent company pays out to run those ferry operations. It will be easier that way to raise freight and passenger rates. It will be easier that way to reduce the level of service and the frequency of travel of those ferries. That is why this is being done.

● (1130)

What I am about to say may come as a shock to some of my colleagues in the House. However, Newfoundlanders do not regard the ferry service between that province and the rest of the country as a scenic route by the sea used for a pleasant excursion across to Nova Scotia on the way to Toronto, Edmonton, Montreal, or Vancouver. It is a pleasant route if the sun is shining and the seas are not rough, but it is not just a scenic route or one of 25 different modes of transportation available to Newfoundlanders. Unless one has a lot of dollars in one's pocket it is the only game in town. Not everyone can afford to fly. There is not a bus which floats across the water. We in Newfoundland do not have special shoes which allow us to walk across the water. We are a province with great swimmers, but 90 miles of salt water is a bit far.

The gulf ferry service is as intrinsic to the economic health of Newfoundland as the blood which beats through your heart, Mr. Speaker. I am sure your heart pressure has increased, as you reel with compassion, anger, and frustration. I know you are a man of principle, a man of integrity, and a man of compassion. If it were not for the position you occupy in the chair, requiring you to maintain a neutral position in the House, you would be on your feet with your fists balled up and

saying: "Enough. What kind of nonsense is this being perpetrated upon the people of that province?"

Atlantic Canadians are aware of the situation. As early as November, 1984 the Conservatives were barely in power long enough to leave their rear-end imprints on the front benches and they brought down an economic statement. The November 1984 economic statement was quite a statement. It resulted in a 15 per cent increase in fares on the East Coast ferry service. That was the thin edge of the wedge, and now the knife is being shoved in all the way.

The Parliamentary Secretary said that this Bill was merely a formality. He understood that there may be one or two Members who wanted to speak on it, but he indicated that they had already changed the name of the company to Marine Atlantic Inc., that they had already severed CN Marine from the CN parent company, and that everything was already in place. Is that not typical? Here we are today, on May 29, 1986 and the Government is seeking parliamentary approval and authorization for a certain series of measures contained in a Bill, and the Parliamentary Secretary rises and says that it is mere formality in that they have already proceeded. Not only does the Bill make a mockery of Parliament, because what is contained within it has already occurred without Parliament's authorization, but it is an example of the approach of the Government to the people of Atlantic Canada. No one has gone to Atlantic Canada and kept the commitment of consultation, which the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) promised in the summer of 1984. No one has gone to Atlantic Canada and kept the commitment of co-operation promised by the Prime Minister in the summer of 1984.

Most citizens of Atlantic Canada will not fully appreciate the impact of the Bill until they discover that it will cost a lot more to ride a ferry and that many of the currently existing services, routes, and frequency of travel are gone. That is the kind of co-operation which Genghis Khan gave to the people he invaded. He left his calling card as he rode, hooves wild, across their lands, villages, and heads. We in Atlantic Canada do not need that kind of Genghis Khan consultation.

I remind the Government that Atlantic Canadians believe firmly in the old saying: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". If one runs roughshod over their concerns, those things which are essential to a health Atlantic economy, and if one leaves a calling card in the carnage, then I warn that one shall reap what one sows. Atlantic Canadians will not forget this jackboot approach to the people of that region.

I should like to speak for a moment about another matter which is indirectly tied to Bill C-88 as part of the master plan of the task force report on ministerial review of the Deputy Prime Minister. There is a section of that report which is indirectly tied to this plan, gut the ferry service, raise the rates, and reduce the level of service. Logically one may say that if the Government does them in, in one area, perhaps it will give them better service in another area. However, what does this task force report say about another mode of transportation in Newfoundland? It actually says two things. First, it says that