

Government Orders

The Halifax—Darmouth Port Development Commission stated: “The economics of grain traffic at the port in 1988 amounted to \$25.9 million in revenues and 263 jobs while flour traffic resulted in \$28.4 million in revenues and 220 jobs”.

The Saint John Port Corporation states that the movement of bulk grain through its port in 1988 under the program amounted to \$8.5 million, along with 90 direct jobs. In addition to the 573 direct jobs lost at these two ports, another 250 indirect jobs may be lost as well.

What will this mean? It will compound the problems that this government is already adding to Atlantic Canada: the fisheries problem, VIA Rail cuts, ACOA's shuffling of money and the shim-sham there.

The loss of the at and east program likely means the closing of the elevator at Halifax and almost certainly the elevator at Saint John meaning further jobs lost. The reason the loss of the program is so devastating to Saint John is that its elevator can only accept grain from railway cars and has no facilities to unload ships. It is going to worsen the situation already existing at Saint John.

If the elevator in Halifax closes, it threatens the future of the Dover Flour Mills. It is the only flour mill in Atlantic Canada. The Conservatives think that nobody knows what Bill C-26 is. They say: “We will sneak that one through”. What usually happens is that the people who are directly involved in any of these particular industries or the supporting infrastructure quickly learn just what the impact is of a sneaky bill like this.

It is only through the diligent work of members of this side of the House, especially the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre who has really been leading the fight against this legislation, to stop it that we can bring to the attention of this House all of the problems involving the resulting gains and losses if in fact it gets through this House.

Who are the winners? With the Tories and the Liberals it is always the wealthy, the better off, those corporations that can afford to pay \$1.7 million for their leadership campaigns.

The winners in the loss of the at and east are central Canada, primarily Montreal, as well as the ports in Ontario.

There is a question here that was raised in previous meetings I have had. It is: Let us take a real look at the subsidies. We are not suggesting that you shut the St. Lawrence Seaway down. But if they are talking about subsidies, let us see what goes into keeping the Seaway going. It is the same kind of argument that supporters of VIA Rail have made.

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The government states: “We are subsidizing it to the hilt. We can't do this. We'll do a lousy job just like the Liberals did and we'll shut it down”. Of course, if you take a look at the subsidies to airlines with airports and maintenance at airports, then you have a true picture. That is the same situation that we are going to get with this particular legislation.

This government, and I am also familiar with our provincial government in British Columbia, would be satisfied to shut almost everything down, put an 800 number in and run the country from Ottawa, or in the case of the Social Credit government in British Columbia from Victoria.

That is the kind of bottom line mentality that you end up with with these types of governments. I do not know if they really and truly understand the effects of the legislation that they try to get through this House from time to time. They should spend more time talking to constituents, the people who work in the jobs in the resources and in the industries in this country to get a better understanding of the impact that they are having.

The removal of at and east likely means a loss of elevators at Halifax and Saint John. They are all-season ports in eastern Canada. We know how important that is to our trade in this country. It will have an effect of further crippling the regions of Canada to the benefit of central Canada. We should try to ensure in this House that we spread those benefits a little further. There is not a region that I can think of that is probably in more need of attention now than it has ever been, namely, Atlantic Canada.

It also shows that Canada is really quite spineless in international trade negotiations. While the U.S. is increasing agriculture subsidies in order to corner some traditional Canadian markets, we have moved toward unilateral disarmament by cutting subsidies to the regions that need them the most. Canada has yet again knuckled under to U.S. and European pressure. It is