

wheats and the hard cereal grains in the west, we need the soft grains and feed grains in the east.

In the meantime, we need some help at the export level to keep the elevators at Saint John and Halifax, because if you do not have elevators in Saint John and Halifax you are not going to have the wherewithal to keep these feed grains that you can develop in Atlantic Canada. That is the bottom line that is so disastrous, to have this bill come into effect with no action on the offsets.

The Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission is as sad as I am that they have had no communication whatsoever, I am told, since they wrote after their appearance before our committee on February 20, 1990. I find that regrettable at best. Perhaps I had better watch what I think at the worst, because I just cannot understand that.

The Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission came before the committee and said that they understand some of the difficulties the government is having and are prepared to suggest a new change for offsets. I want to get this on the record so that someone somewhere in the bureaucracy can finally read it because perhaps it has not got around. After all, it was only February, 1990, and perhaps it has not had time to circulate around and be addressed.

The proposal that the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission laid before the transport committee for the first time caught us all by surprise. It is as follows:

In lieu of "At and East" and proposed only to apply on an annual basis during period of seaway winter closing:

- (i) rail rates on export grain and flour to Halifax/Saint John be set at a fixed rate differential over St. Lawrence ports at a level necessary to make the Maritime ports competitive with St. Lawrence ports and to encourage the use of the Maritime ports and the railways serving these ports;
- (ii) railways to be reimbursed by subsidy for the difference between the "fixed" rate level and compensatory rates;
- (iii) facilities to receive grain by water at the Saint John elevator be provided; and
- (iv) to prevent undue burden on the federal treasury—

These are not politicians talking, this is the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission trying to get something in place to help us. Out west they have the tariff off of corn. I see colleagues of mine from the west. The parliamentary secretary is from the west. Why should they have the removal of the corn tariff in British

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Columbia when we still have it hanging around our throats in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada? That is part of the other discrimination.

To continue my mild remarks on their reasonable proposal, they say:

- (iv) to prevent undue burden on the federal treasury, the special provision for "fixed" rates could be limited to maximum tonnages both for export grain and flour but not less than the volume required to maintain the grain elevators at Halifax and Saint John and the flour mill at Halifax as viable operations.

They end up their note by saying:

The APTC would be prepared to work with federal officials to assist with the development and implementation of these proposals.

That is dated February 19, 1990. That is a variation of what they presented in 1985, and we had not heard. Can I stay here and stay silent as a member from Atlantic Canada when we have not even heard?

This is second reading and this is going to go to a committee. I wish one of the four ministers responsible for resolving these offsets was in the House. There was one but he has left. I wish there was a minister involved in the hoped for discussion on this issue who, before this debate concludes, could come into the House and give some assurance that there is going to be action on the offsets, perhaps not to the total satisfaction of the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission, but at least some action.

That memo to the transport committee was dated February 19 and they came on February 20 and presented their evidence and in effect supplemented what they said.

I certainly cannot support this bill at this time. I am only hoping that some sense is going to come to the ministers involved to address this serious issue. You are from western Canada, Mr. Speaker, and have been a valued member of this House for many years, as is my friend from Regina—Lumsden.

I just cannot believe that a government would bring in a bill affecting the Crownsnest Pass without a lot more deliberation, especially when there was an agency that was willing to work out a resolution of the difficulties with the loss of the subsidy. Their proposal, on their own figures, and I have not heard a rebuttal yet from the federal officials, is to reduce this subsidy on their own from \$35 million to about \$10 million. That \$10 million means the future of the elevators in Saint John and