

Government Orders

I said: "Are those working?" The answer was: "No, no, those aren't working, but a couple of them are on stand-by. You see, we do not send anymore ice-breakers to accompany ships that go through the Arctic. We found that it is more cost-effective to leave the ice-breaker in Quebec City tied up and if the ship gets stuck, we will send up the ice-breaker then—more cost effective".

There are another five tied up in Nova Scotia. I said to the Coast Guard: "Now, come on, you have islands that are being totally isolated because of ice. Can't you assign more ice-breakers to keep these islands open?" The answer was: "No, that is not the policy of the Coast Guard anymore. You see, we are into a policy of trying to save money".

See how things have changed. The hon. member a moment ago said: "The hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte stood in the House and he was opposed to user fees with ice-breakers".

Of course he was, of course he was. Why, if the Government of Canada brought in that policy there would not be any ferry boats operating. There would not be any because the ferry boats are no longer owned or subsidized by the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada did away with the subsidies for all those ferry boats, didn't they Mr. member for Labrador. He knows quite well. The government did away with that. Now it is whoever uses the ferry boats has to pay for them, not the Government of Canada.

In fact, when we think about this policy of subsidies and trying to save money we know quite a change has taken place in Atlantic Canada. The hon. member spoke about marine transportation, but that is only half the story. Marine Atlantic moves our freight and people throughout Atlantic Canada. Yet, Marine Atlantic has no 1-800 number anymore. We cannot pick up the phone anywhere in Canada and phone a 1-800 number to find out when the ferry boats are going to operate in Atlantic Canada. It was cut out this year by the Government of Canada.

We can no longer phone a 1-800 number to find out or make reservations on Marine Atlantic, but if we were in the United States we can.

Mr. Rideout: That can't be true.

Mr. Baker: Oh yes, oh yes. In other words, in Texas we can phone to find out when the ferries are operating. To

make a reservation to go to Newfoundland on a ferry or to P.E.I. phoning from Texas you can do it free of charge, but if you are living in Canada you cannot do it anymore. The Government of Canada through Marine Atlantic says it was because of the high costs that it wanted to keep the 1-800 number from the United States because fewer people were using the 1-800 number. Those are the decisions that have been made by the Government of Canada in trying to reduce subsidies for transportation in eastern Canada.

• (1650)

I was looking at the books the other day for marine transportation and I noticed that three vessels now used for the movement of freight on the east coast are not even registered in Canada. In fact, the last vessel that was hired by CN is actually not only registered in a foreign country, but owned in a foreign country.

Quite a change has taken place. If you picked up the telephone in that same area we are talking about, from Labrador down to the northeast coast of Newfoundland, you would no longer speak into the receiver of a company that is a subsidiary of the Government of Canada. That was sold last year.

An hon. member: Really?

Mr. Baker: Yes, and it was sold—this is a long story, but I am going to make it very short.

An hon. member: Oh, no, no, we want the story.

Mr. Baker: The successful bidder was the bigger telephone company in the province, represented of course by a consultant who happened to be yes, a former member of the House of Commons. That is the telephone company. We can no longer pick up the telephone and phone through a telephone company that was called TNT at the time, up until a couple of years ago—Terra Nova Tel.

An hon. member: That is an explosive.

Mr. Baker: It was an explosive telephone company. It was an excellent telephone company. You could phone and ask information what the number was for such and such and it would be able to tell you, because it was living locally in those areas.

The telephone company is gone. Now you go down to the airport. There is no longer a sign saying Air Canada. That is gone since this government took over. You can no longer pick up the telephone and phone through the government subsidized company, a subsidiary of the