

*Canadian Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987*

**Mr. Forrestall:** You're misleading.

**Mr. MacLellan:** No, that is not misleading at all. That is exactly the situation.

We must look at exactly what the Government is trying to do. The Senate sent this Bill back, the Speaker has made his ruling, and that is inviolate and is to stand. However, very important questions must be considered. The Government's motion says that:

—this House believes that in dividing the Bill, the Senate has altered the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations and qualifications of the grants of aid and supplies set out in the Bill, contrary to Standing Order 87, as recommended by Her Excellency the Governor General to this House, and has therefore infringed the privileges of this House, and asks that the Senate return Bill C-103 in an undivided form.

First, the principles and intention of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency have not been infringed upon in any form whatsoever. As a result of the Senate separating the Bill, all of the provisions which relate to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency are now before the House. Whether the Government or the Speaker feels that the rights of the House of Commons have been infringed upon is another matter. It is up to the House to decide whether or not it wants to adopt the Bill in its divided form. That is in the Speaker's decision.

There is nothing to stop the Government if it is, as it says it is, interested in getting the provisions regarding the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency through. There is nothing to stop the Government approving the provisions which deal with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. They are before us in the House right now. How can the Government say that the Liberal Party is stalling ACOA? For one thing, ACOA is already in operation. Second, the revisions are before the House right now.

The reasons for the situation which exists in the House now is that the Government is not interested in ensuring the early passage of the Bill implementing ACOA. The Government is more interested in retribution against Cape Breton and the Cape Breton Development Corporation. In the Deputy House Leader's statement he did not mention what will happen to the Cape Breton Development Corporation as a result of the undivided Bill. ACOA is only Part 1 of this Bill. Part 2 relates to doing away completely with the Industrial Development Division of the Cape Breton Development Corporation.

The Cape Breton Development Corporation was set up under a separate Act. If the Government wants to do away with the Industrial Development Division, the way to do that would be through the Cape Breton Development Corporation Act. However, it has chosen to do it as a rider on the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Bill. It has decided that if it does it that way it will be able to include something unpalatable and economically devastating to the people of Cape Breton in a wider subject of general appeal, thereby catching the people of Cape Breton and Atlantic Canada in a catch-22 situation.

If they want the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency enshrined in legislation they have to do away with the Cape Breton Development Corporation. The people of Atlantic Canada are being told that if they want the legislation to implement this agency passed they have to punish the people of Cape Breton who have had the Industrial Development Division since 1968. In order to get the general benefit of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency they have to turn against the people and the economy of Cape Breton by including the provisions doing away with the Industrial Development Division.

What happens if that succeeds? I am talking about precedents and the rights of Canadians. This would be a precedent because it would give the Government free rein to include such unpalatable provisions for a certain small region of this country in any Bill it wanted to pass if, of course, the Bill was generally acceptable.

In the Bill dealing with the Western Diversification Fund, which this Party supported, there was no provision for any part of western Canada to be detrimentally impacted upon. The people in western Canada did not have to turn on any part of western Canada in order to get the general benefits of the Western Diversification Fund, and therefore this Party approved it, and rightly so.

Why can the people of Atlantic Canada not have the same benefits? Why can the people of Atlantic Canada not have a program to set up the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency without having to cut the economic feet from under the people of Cape Breton? That is the major question right now and that is something the Government does not want to explain to the people of Canada.

The Cape Breton Development Corporation Act was passed in 1967 setting up the Cape Breton Development Corporation which had two divisions; a Coal Mining Division and an Industrial Development Division. The purpose of the Industrial Development Division was to bring in industry to replace the jobs that were being lost in the coal industry at that time. The people of Cape Breton had a reprieve in the early 1970s because the price of oil went up.

● (1150)

However, let us consider the situation in Cape Breton at the present time. There are at least 1,500 less jobs in the coal industry today than in 1967. Employment at Sydney Steel Corporation is less than half of what it was 10 years ago. The Government has closed the two heavy water plants, costing the area between 600 and 700 jobs.

The Government just stated that it is closing the railway in Newfoundland, which supposedly will not hurt the people in the Sydney and North Sydney area. Yet we are told that the containers will be routed through Halifax and Montreal. There is no compensation for the people in that regard.