

Government Orders

We are not ashamed to create wealth. We are not ashamed to give the poor people of Canada an opportunity to better their position. We do not want to keep them in their state simply so they will provide a voting base for our party.

The future of this country lies in creating wealth. The first step in creating wealth is to recognize the economic problems that exist. Bill C-26 recognizes the problem that exists. It is a first step to remedying it. I hope every member of the House will recognize that and not hide behind some alleged solution which they know does not exist that will allow the problem to continue and that will have a "crass appeal to their own electorate".

Mr. Hovdebo: Madam Speaker, for the party that has created a lot of poverty and which is in the process of institutionalizing it, it is good to hear the hon. member talk about wealth.

Concerning the record of consultation of this particular government, and in particular the consultation on this particular issue, the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission put before the government an alternative approach which it thought would ease the situation. It said: "This is what we can do with at and east when the time comes". It has put before the government other alternatives in terms of what needs to happen to keep them in a survival mode if the government does pass this bill.

The impact of the proposal to terminate the at and east rates would be against the farming community, both in the Atlantic provinces and elsewhere. What is being talked about here is the importation of barley, wheat and oats from France and other European countries that can supply the east coast of Canada cheaper than domestic suppliers.

These are the kinds of solutions that are going to have to be put in place if alternatives to the at and east are not established. We in the west and in central Canada cannot supply from central Canada and from the west those products which are needed in the east.

The alternatives mean an impact on the west and central Canada. It is too bad that the reason for this particular change of direction by the government is based on ideology alone because when the at and east was established originally it was not entirely to keep the

grain going to Buffalo and New York. It was intended to keep the facilities along the Atlantic coast operating.

In fact Jack Pickersgill said that it was to ensure that we would have rates which would provide some incentive to the shippers to use the facilities of the Atlantic ports.

Does the hon. member not recognize that even his own port is going to be affected negatively by this bill and that Saint John is going to be affected more so?

Mr. Crosby: This is a great example of House of Commons debate. If the debate goes on long enough, the truth emerges.

The members on the other side who are standing to oppose Bill C-26 are not trying to help Atlantic Canada. They are not trying to help the port of Halifax or the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia. They are trying to help their own self-interests. They are trying to help western farmers. They are trying to help corn producers in Ontario. That is perfectly legitimate, but stand up and say that. Do not pretend you are helping the port of Halifax if you are from Saskatchewan. Do not pretend you are trying to help the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia if you come from the corn production belt of Ontario. Tell the truth. That is all anybody wants. Just tell the truth.

Let me deal with the point about consultation. It is strange the member would suggest there was no consultation when I have here before me a paper from the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission detailing their lobbying on the Atlantic region freight assistance program. They say it is safe. They say they have consulted with the government and the feed freight program is safe. They talk about the at and east. They mention that it is terminated and that it will produce some economic difficulties.

How about this for consultation? They say right in their paper that their concerns will be followed by an early meeting under the auspices of Transport Canada at the regional level to evaluate the impacts and seek out possible means of minimizing the negative impacts on the Atlantic region. That is what is all about. Get rid of the at and east and then remove the damaging impacts, if any, by other programs. That is simple enough.

Mr. Walker: Madam Speaker, the convoluted speech we heard was only matched by the convoluted answer to the preceding question. Let us see if we can bring some