

Canadian Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987

It shall not be lawful for the House of Commons to adopt or pass any Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill for the Appropriation of any Part of the Public Revenue, or of any Tax or Impost, to any purpose that has not been first recommended to that House—

There we have the word "Appropriation". Can we really say that this Bill is an Appropriations Bill? Of course it is not. An Appropriation Bill is a Bill that appropriates money for the House of Commons. This certainly cannot be considered an Appropriations Bill under that definition.

Mr. Valcourt: So the Speaker is wrong?

Mr. MacLellan: What about Section 53? It says:

Bills for appropriating any Part of the Public Revenue, or for imposing any Tax or Impost, shall originate in the House of Commons.

Fine, but once again we are talking about the word "appropriating". This is not a Bill appropriating money.

What we have to ask ourselves is this. Is there anything in this Bill which says that we need it in order to fund the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency or the supposed successors of the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation? There is nothing. The only reference to money is the salary of a vice-president, and we do not need this Bill to appropriate the salary for a vice-president.

Mr. Mazankowski: Why are you against Atlantic Canada?

Mr. MacLellan: Then we have had reference to a Royal Recommendation as if any Bill that had a Royal Recommendation were a money Bill. Yet there is no indication that because a Bill has a Royal Recommendation it is a money Bill and cannot be amended. Bill C-18, for example, I put to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski), had a Royal Recommendation, but it was amended, as was Bill C-22. Just because it has a Royal Recommendation does not mean a Bill is a money Bill, nor does it mean that it cannot be amended. The question is: What kind of a Bill do we have here? As I said earlier, we do not need this Bill to approve funding. The Estimates are where we approve funding for ACOA, and the Estimates have been passed and the funding is in place.

During the meeting of the committee dealing with this issue in the other place the President of ACOA was asked this question:

But there is nothing in this bill that gives you any funds. In other words, I do not see a dollar bill in it.

MR. MCPHAIL: I was speaking of the Estimates.

SENATOR MACEACHEN: Yes, and your money comes from the Estimates, not this Bill.

MR. MCPHAIL: Yes.

The Minister of State said the Government presented this Bill so decisions could be made regionally. One of the big decisions that was made regionally was on the funding allotted to the Industrial Development Division of the Cape Breton Development Corporation. That was the major feature, that decisions were made by the Board of Directors of the company in Cape Breton and the funding for that division was over \$11

million a year. The decisions on that \$11 million of funding were made in Cape Breton.

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The Deputy House Leader said that they want the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to be in operation. Well, it is in full operation at the present time. When going through my mail on Friday I found some notices in my "in basket". The letterheads on all four of the notices read "Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency". Evidently the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has its letterhead and has had it for quite a while. One press release says:

Five Valley Firms to Receive ACOA assistance.

Pat Nowlan, M.P., Annapolis Valley—Hants, announced today that five Valley firms will receive assistance from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

That is dated July 5. The second one reads:

Pictou County Projects Receive Assistance.

Ten Pictou County entrepreneurs will receive \$1,076,867 in contributions and loans to carry out expansion development plans that will create 85 permanent jobs.

That announcement was made by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. MacKay). There again is proof that ACOA is in operation. Another release dated July 6 says:

Minister of Public Works, and M.P. for Halifax (said) . . . Halterm Limited will receive \$450,000 ACOA contribution . . . Halifax-Dartmouth Industries Limited will (receive) . . . \$160,000 . . .

A release dated July 8 says:

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency ACOA will provide assistance to four companies to establish, expand and modernize their operations in Dartmouth.

It was none other than the Member of Parliament for Dartmouth—Halifax East who made that announcement. Today, along with other members of the Conservative Party, he is saying that we need this legislation in order to get ACOA in operation.

First, this Bill is not needed for the funding because the funding is provided with the Estimates, and certainly no Conservative Government would ever give the funding if it did not have it. They say they need this Bill in order to get the structure in place so that they can operate. They are already operating and already giving funding, as we have seen.

What exactly is the present state of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency? It is in full operation and the Government is asking today that this House give retroactive approval to the origin of it. That is fair enough, but Members should not be spreading doom and gloom all over Atlantic Canada that there will be no funding for projects unless this Bill is passed, because that will not be the case. Mind you, it seems that the only places where approval is being given is in constituencies represented by government Members. The reason for that, of course, is that they want to persuade opposition Members to change their position and sabotage the Cape Breton Development Corporation and people of Cape Breton.