

*Government Orders*

They have an exempt status. What is happening to all the workers who are coming from external affairs now into this new organization called CARSH? They will lose their status two years down the road and access to new jobs as public servants. There is the question of estimates and whether there will be three separate estimate lines; the question of the memorandum of understanding and the relationship with the Department of External Affairs. Is it in their best interest?

There are many unanswered questions. I understand the concerns that are being raised. If you do not know where your budget is coming from, if you do not know how your budget is going to be reviewed, if you do not know how the projects coming in are going to be juried or not, if you do not know how the staff which is key to this being effective is going to take place, if you do not know what the criteria of the board selection is going to be, then my motion is very relevant. If not, certainly there has to be a sunset clause in this kind of an operation.

I thank my colleague for the very enlightened question which gave me the opportunity to explain why this motion has been put before the House and is a very enlightened one.

**Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-93. Before I do, I would like to register my objection, if not with the procedural relevance of this, certainly with the intent of the government in combining so many pieces into this legislation.

There are many agencies in this piece of legislation to which I would like to address my remarks. I am going to be obliged to confine them to one part of the bill, namely the part that deals with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. I believe that at least this part should have been separated from the remainder of the bill so that we, in the House of Commons and in committee, could study the changes that are proposed to ACOA more carefully as they address the very real difficulties which the people of Atlantic Canada and more particularly the people of Cape Breton face at this time in our history in terms of the economy of that region.

What the Government of Canada is doing in this piece of legislation is eliminating an agency, Enterprise Cape

Breton Corporation, which was created when the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency was set up in 1987. We in this party are opposed to that action. I would like to say a few words about why we are opposed to that action and why we are so opposed to this legislation and particularly to this part of it.

Before I do, I would like to say a few words about the economic situation in Cape Breton. It has always been our lot in history to have an economic environment which has been difficult for the residents of Cape Breton. Many Cape Bretoners have been obliged as a result to find employment elsewhere.

**Mr. Lewis:** It's because they vote Liberal.

**Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):** No heckling from the other side. This is a serious matter. This legislation concerns a matter which is of great concern to all of the people of Cape Breton. We have always faced difficult circumstances economically in Cape Breton but in the recent years, it has been even worse. Recently, the news about the economy there is very bleak.

The central sources of employment, namely the mines and the steel mills in industrial Cape Breton, have been steadily declining in terms of the number of jobs that they have been able to support. As a result of recent activities facing two mines operated by Devco, nearly 1,000 miners could be facing permanent job loss. That being in a region where the unemployment rate is already alarmingly high is a serious cause for concern on Cape Breton Island.

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The steel plant as well has been facing ongoing decline in employment. Despite a great deal of capital investment over the last two or three decades, the employment that facility is able to support is as low as it has ever been. Those who remain there have serious concern about whether the steel plant will enjoy the support of the provincial government and it will be able to stay open in the medium to long term. That steel plant is absolutely crucial to the economic future of Sydney in particular because no other alternatives have been developed.

Certainly nothing this government has done over the past eight years has given the people of that part of Cape Breton any reason to hope it has created some kind of