

Government Orders

jobs, the equitable sharing of cost and the maintenance of services in both official languages.

In the last session the opposition attempted to approach this matter in a very collaborative manner, but it was rebuffed by the former minister's petty, I might add, mealy-mouthed and duplicitous manner. We believe that the new minister ought to be given an opportunity to correct this situation by starting this bill all over again.

As a supporter of the Speaker in the chair, I want to make it perfectly clear to you, Sir, as occupant of the chair that we do not oppose this motion for the sake of being difficult. As I have already indicated, the opposition has clearly behaved in a reasonable and co-operative manner when presented by reasonable conduct of desirable legislation. We cannot be expected to co-operate either in the passage of inadequate or downright bad legislation. We most especially cannot be expected to co-operate in this attempt by the government to subvert the parliamentary process, to evade parliamentary scrutiny and public input, and to shirk its responsibility.

This motion represents yet another move backward in the government's march toward parliamentary reform.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I say to you and to the members who have participated in the procedural aspects of this motion and who will now participate in the substance of the motion as ordered by the Chair, that we feel very strongly that this has subverted the legislative process which has been codified in the Standing Orders of the House and referred to in Beauchesne's, Erskine May and other sources as referred to by all hon. members on both sides.

Let it be said and let it be understood that we on this side of the House will fight under the provisions of the Standing Orders and parliamentary tradition. Whenever there is bad legislation which is not in the best interest of the public policy of this country, we will oppose, we will amend and we will do our best to get a fair deal, an appropriate deal for all Canadians wherever they live.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this motion today. I would like to focus my comments on one particular bill, Bill C-26. Before doing so, I would just like to say that in a general

sense the debate taking place today goes to the heart of parliamentary democracy in this country.

We have seen example after example of this government ramming through its own legislation, ramming through its own wants and desires without proper consultation, without following rules, I would suggest, and in a fashion that causes people in this country not only to wish for but demand some major parliamentary reforms which are long overdue, given the attitude and the actions of a government in its second majority mandate.

• (1200)

With respect to Bill C-26, I think it is a microcosm of many of the problems that exist with this government. I have a personal interest in Bill C-26. I was the person for the New Democratic Party who was on the legislative committee with respect to that bill.

With respect to Bill C-26, the government has ignored Parliament, the people, experts, reports and now it is going to finally ram through a piece of legislation that was removed from the books two years ago.

The history of this bill is very interesting. The At and East bill is a bill which allows the export of grain and flour through the ports of Halifax and Saint John, through a subsidy program and that is that during the winter months when the seaway cannot be used it is very expensive to transport grain to those two ports. This program was put in place to offset that cost to allow the usage of those ports. Those ports are important to western Canadians like myself with respect to the Canadian Wheat Board when grain is shipped for export. It is important to have open seaports and those are the only two ice-free seaports on the eastern seaboard. It is important to maritimers, to eastern Canadians with respect to livestock, poultry, cattle and so on in terms of getting some cheaper rates for their feed. It is important to places like Dover Flour Mill which rely on the elevator for storage of their grain.

The interesting thing about this program is that the government ignored reports from the maritimes. The Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission, back about 1985 or 1986, approached the government and said: "Look, you are spending too much money on this program. You are spending \$40 million a year. Here is a