

We should examine the transportation policy as it relates to Atlantic Canada from the point of view of enhancing assistance in Atlantic Canada so that new incentives can be given to potential investors to move manufactured goods from Atlantic Canada to markets not only in the remainder of the nation but especially to markets in the northeastern United States. The people over at External Affairs should carry on negotiations with the United States to see how we could move goods from Atlantic Canada to the northeastern United States, an area with a tremendous population base which desires and requires the goods that are produced now. That movement should be made easier.

As well, an examination of the transportation policy could look into the tremendous shipping potential that is available in Atlantic Canada. Long before Confederation, maritimers realized that their greatest potential lay in the fact that they lived right beside the ocean. They realized that the world, and particularly Europe and the United States, was more readily accessible to them than to those in any other part of the country. We in the Maritimes utilized our shipping possibilities to an extent that they are not being utilized now. As a matter of fact, through duty-free ports and things of that nature, we are allowing other nations against which we compete to have an advantage over us. Without duty-free ports, we are attempting to compete with those nations and are finding that they are beating us almost every time. We must put in place new policies that allow the industrial sector to compete on an equal footing, in a way which they cannot at this time, with some of the other nations of the world. That is another example of what a transportation study could do for us.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention the blueberry industry because at this time it is a big dollar producing industry in Atlantic Canada. The people involved in that industry have done a tremendous job in developing new markets as a result of their accessibility to the ocean.

I just got the sign which indicates to me that my 20 minutes are up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Are there any questions or comments related to the remarks of the hon. gentleman?

Mr. McMillan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Cumberland-Colchester (Mr. Coates) on his speech. In light of the point that he made that there has not been a major study of Atlantic transportation issues for a long time, a point that I think is well taken, I wonder if the Hon. Member would think it advisable for the federal Government to establish a royal commission broadly representative of people in the public and private sectors of the Atlantic region and beyond to investigate certain transportation issues.

Such a commission could investigate, for example, the federal Government's steady cutbacks on maritime freight rate subsidies and the effect of those cutbacks on regional development. It could investigate the dismantling by the federal Government of the railway system throughout the region, including my Province of Prince Edward Island, and it could

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investigate the steady deterioration under this Government of air service throughout the region, a service which can only get worse, I should think, with the sale by EPA of its assets to CP. In short, would the Hon. Member think it advisable for the federal Government to set up a royal commission to look into these and other transportation issues affecting the region?

Mr. Coates: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the point I was attempting to make in my speech. I tried to make the point that such a commission was needed, whether or not it was a royal commission.

It has concerned me over the years that even the MacPherson Royal Commission did not undertake a really in-depth examination of transportation problems in Atlantic Canada. As a result, we see these aberrations like the examination that was undertaken by the Minister of Transport last year that lasted for six months. Then everything was put on hold and we were told after six months that the Government was not going to do anything one way or another with regard to assistance. However, it did almost totally eliminate any possibility of movement or expansion and it did impair the ability of the people who were affected by that particular subsidy to make any decisions at all.

Such an examination should certainly take air service into account. We hope that the Minister's recent announcement about the deregulation that comes with his new air policy will eliminate some of the problems to be caused by the amalgamation of CP and EPA that are envisaged by some people. I think the people in the area have a right to know what that deregulation will do and what guarantees will flow from it. They have a right to know if the various provinces will be served as well as or better than they are being served at this point in time.

Mr. McMillan: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am not quite sure, but I think that when I posed my question, I may have referred to cutbacks on maritime freight rates. If I did say that, what I really meant was cutbacks on maritime freight rate subsidies. I hope that the *Hansard* reporter will record my meaning accurately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Are there any other questions?

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I have a very short question to ask. I do not want to make a speech although I would like to make one in a few moments, if I may. The hon. gentleman was just about to mention a very important area for possible development in the rural areas of Atlantic Canada, that is the blueberry industry. I would like to know what the hon. gentleman was about to say when his time ran out.

Mr. Coates: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member. I will be very interested in his remarks regarding the fishery because I know that he has views that could be very helpful and valuable to the House in that regard.

I was going to say that there has been a tremendous expansion in the blueberry industry in my constituency as well as throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. I am not sure