

Government Orders

action is taken to provide assistance in other ways, other than through an uncontrolled subsidy like the at and east, those kinds of problems can be resolved. In fact, the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission has proposed a number of measures that could be taken to offset any harm caused by the at and east. Members opposite should direct their minds to those proposals as I am sure members on this side of the House will do.

The vital point is that even the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission recognizes that a first step is the abolition of the at and east. I think it is unfortunate from the point of view of those involved in the port facility and those involved in the agricultural industry that we do not have side by side with Bill C-26 a proposal to address some of the items that have been brought forward by the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Committee and others. Surely that will come in time.

As long as the at and east subsidization is in place, nothing is going to change. Persons who raise livestock in Nova Scotia and other Atlantic provinces will not know what the future holds because nobody has supported the at and east subsidization as the proper resolution of the problem.

There are at the present time, and I want to be quite frank about this, real dangers to the continued existence of the grain elevator in the port of Halifax and the port of Saint John. I am sure all of us on the government side will call upon the ministries to recognize that problem and to take appropriate action. I think everybody on the government side recognizes the problem faced by farmers in Nova Scotia with respect to the raising of livestock and the fact that they are not in a competitive position.

I want to remind the House of what took place prior to the April 1989 budget. At that time there was considerable concern among members of the agricultural community that feed freight assistance would be eliminated. Members of the agriculture industry made it clear that they wanted the feed freight assistance to continue. As a result of their representations the feed freight assistance program was continued. But everybody, including government and industry people and everybody else concerned with the problem also recognize that the solution to the feed problem is self-sufficiency. If the industry could become self-sufficient with respect to feed grains the problem would be removed.

What the government has put in place is a program to foster self-sufficiency in feed grain for the east coast livestock industry. I think everybody recognizes that the solutions lie in that direction. In a similar vein, the solution to problems for mills on the east coast, particularly the existing mills and the grain elevator that is associated with the transportation of grain and grain products and flour, lies in other programs and other forms of assistance.

Why members would continue to block passage of the bill and seek ways to prevent its passage is beyond my comprehension. I do not see anybody in industry or any other place telling us to keep the at and east in place. If the motion before the House of Commons to give Bill C-26 a six-month hoist were passed, the at and east would continue and nothing would be resolved.

I want to stress again the fact that Bill C-26 is about reality. It is about the realities of the agriculture industry, the realities of the port industry and the realities of the milling industry.

Mr. Laporte: What is your alternative?

Mr. Crosby: If you are not willing, as a member of the House or Commons, to face reality, then you are not going to help the people of Canada resolve any problems. We have seen that time and time again in this House of Commons.

The New Democratic Party and every one of its members will not face reality. They want to create a panacea. They want to pretend that there are simple solutions to complicated problems. They want to nationalize poverty and make it an asset available to them because they know that only poor people will support their policy. If they were to create wealth across this country, they would lose their support. Their support lies in the welfare programs. Their support lies in the government assistance that they want to give to people. That is the way they attract their support.

• (1610)

I do not think everybody in this House of Commons realizes that that is not the way the Progressive Conservative government attracts support. We attract support by recognizing the economic realities of a nation by moving to resolve the problems that exist and in that way create a future.