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Rail system that less than 5 per cent of the population of this country uses. My understanding from the Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard) is that the nine protected routes represent isolated communities to which there is no other means of travel. Is it fair that the 95 per cent or 98 per cent of the people of New Brunswick who use the TransCanada Highway system should be denied its rebuilding or imperilled in its use for years because we spend half a billion dollars each year in subsidies to maintain a passenger rail service that less than 5 per cent of the population uses. I do not think that is fair.

In so far as freight transport rates are concerned, I have spoken in this House in the past two weeks about the retention of freight rail service to the Saint John River valley. If it is viable on analysis, then I would certainly fight for it to be retained. I have spoken extensively about the impact of ACOA this afternoon. ACOA has created immense economic activity in Atlantic Canada which will be reflected over the next two or three years when the money now committed is drawn down and the projects are started.

I believe that is fair and I believe that if you talk about fairness it seems to me that for this Government to average \$425 million in Atlantic regional economic aid over the next five years as compared to \$285 million in the previous five years, that is very fair. The figures vary on what the increase will actually be, but there will be somewhere between 35 per cent and 50 per cent more regional development spending in the next five than the last five years, and the last five years were 50 per cent higher than the best Liberal record of development spending ever. On the basis of fairness, I believe we are not only fair but we are far and away more productive and more beneficial to Atlantic Canada than any Liberal Government has been.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no more questions or comments. Debate. Point of order, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier).

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Government requested that the Speaker transfer written questions Nos. 45, 52, 53, 62, 64, 83 and 88 to Notice of Motions for the Production of Papers pursuant to Standing Order 39(6).

At the time the Speaker asked for comments from interested Members. I would like to give notice now that whenever the Speaker deems it appropriate I would like in the name of my Party to make comments on that procedure.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Halifax (Ms. Clancy) on debate.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate of crucial importance and paramount interest to my region of Atlantic Canada. My region has been battered and beaten by a cruel and uncaring Government. The list is long and the sorrows are many. Procrastination and bad planning has devastated the Atlantic fishery. Cuts to VIA Rail threaten the lifestyle and mobility of thousands of Atlantic Canadians including seniors and students. The slashing of the UI program will throw workers on to hard pressed provincial welfare rolls, and still the government juggernaut rolls on.

ACOA cuts mark the death knell for viable regional development. Uncertainty and the refusal of the Government to give us any certainty with regard to ERDA wounds our resource industries, especially forestry, as well as highways, tourism and the environment. Cuts to established program funding attack health care and post-secondary education.

My riding of Halifax which is the commercial centre of Atlantic Canada, will reel from the shock waves created by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). It will also suffer directly from this tornado of a Budget. The Atlantic East subsidy was established to encourage the continued use of the eastern ports for the export of grain and flour and to ensure that rates established would provide inducement and incentive to shippers to use the facilities of the Atlantic ports.

The Canada Grains Council noted that both the Crow rate and the Atlantic East should be considered complimentary and indeed the existence of these subsidies has been the basis of investment and marketing. Business interests, while aware that a phase-out might be equally expected, thought that this would occur with both a reasonable period of adjustment and in such a way as to not affect adversely the balance of east-west trade. This has not happened. The Government, like a thief in the night, has cut off eastern Canada while maintaining \$680,000 in subsidies to the West. Further, Transport Canada has told grain shippers not to expect transitional