

*Adjournment Debate*

I also outlined for the minister that the termination of this particular route would prevent students from having affordable, reasonable transportation costs to pursue their education.

It was interesting to note way back in 1981, in particular in July of 1981 when a previous administration had made some cuts, some of the comments which were made by the then Secretary of State for External Affairs and, of course, the present Deputy Prime Minister. These comments were contained in the Report of the Conservative Task Force on Rail Passenger Service, 1981. I think it is worth pointing out to members who are present as well as the viewing audience the hypocrisy that we see being practised each and every day by the government.

The first statement is one by the present Secretary of State for External Affairs. He said on July 28, 1981, with regard to cut-backs of VIA Rail: "An act of the deepest cynicism and arrogance—(that) can only aggravate regional disparity".

• (1810 )

The Deputy Prime Minister said on July 18, 1981, as quoted in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*: "The cuts are another example of double dealing and double standards. I find the decision and the whole process most objectionable".

Contained in the report were a number of items which I believe to be germane to the points which I am attempting to impress upon the government, namely, that "special groups of Canadians, such as the disabled, the elderly and economically disadvantaged, to whom other passenger modes are physically or financially impossible, will be severely affected by the cut-backs".

That was contained in the Conservative document of 1981, and it is very much applicable in 1989 with regard to the Halifax-Sydney route. They go on in their document of 1981 to state: "The cuts discriminate unfairly against Canadians living in sparsely populated or remote areas, such as northerners or Indian peoples, who have no other modes of transportation available to or from their communities".

I suggest to the parliamentary secretary, who is ably trying to defend a very impossible situation for the Government of Canada, that in that part of Canada the

opportunities in terms of modes of transportation, if you are unemployed, sick, elderly or indeed disadvantaged in some way, are non-existent. The passenger rail train has served Canadians in that part of Canada immeasurably well over many, many years.

Further, contained in their document of 1981, the Conservative opposition as it was then stated the following four things which I believe are worthy of consideration. "The cuts are unjustifiably discriminatory toward certain areas of Canada and thus will create further discord, disharmony and regional tension".

I say to the parliamentary secretary, you have accomplished that. Your goal obviously was to create disharmony, regional disparities and havoc. You have accomplished that by terminating the Halifax-Sydney route of VIA Rail.

"Government policies to improve regional economic opportunities are often offset by contradictory policies of reducing transportation services to those same regions".

Modes of transportation are essential in terms of any economic strategy but, more important, they are absolutely essential when you are dealing with an economy which at the present time, by all standards—provincially, nationally and internationally—is well below average. To make it viable, to make it more attractive and make it more appealing, the way to go is not to cut one of the modes of transportation.

"Over two-thirds of the job losses caused by the cuts will occur in regions beyond central Canada, mainly in areas already disadvantaged or with existing unemployment problems".

In parts of my riding unemployment ranges from 22.9 per cent upward to 35 to 40 per cent. Certainly these cut-backs will operate in a very disruptive way.

The report goes on to state: "A widespread view exists that any savings produced by the cut-backs across the country will be spent to upgrade services in the narrow transportation corridor between Quebec City and Windsor".

What are they going to do with the savings *vis-à-vis* VIA Rail? Are they going to put them into other modes of transportation in the poorer regions of this country? The answer has been very clear from the outset that this government is not interested in any meaningful way in assisting those poorer regions of the country. What