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service, and to find innovative and exciting ways to serve Canadians with it.

The figures are absolutely staggering. VIA Rail is such an expensive service and program that it conflicts with the very possibility of developing such major infrastructure projects so central to the development of Atlantic Canada. For example, the Trans-Canada Highway system in New Brunswick. Therefore, to face up to the cost of VIA Rail, to measure the fact that it serves only 5 per cent or less of the transportation market, to recognize that it has consumed \$3 billion in subsidies over the past eight years while its ridership has diminished, is only to be financially responsible.

Third, we must emphasize the priorities for which Atlantic Canadians are famous. We must exercise priorities toward entrepreneurship which ACOA has done, toward the export on a free trade basis of our services, such as engineering, to the development of our forest industry, to aquaculture, to mining and to the attraction to Atlantic Canada of viable new industries. Atlantic Canada is a great place to live, work and to build a career.

Fourth, we must, and I believe that this Government will, establish those support programs, that adjustment assistance for those distressed situations that I have described, in the fishery, in the Canadian Forces base reductions.

I would like to tell the people of Atlantic Canada that they are well represented in this Government. We are 12 strong on this side of the House from Atlantic Canada. The message for Atlantic Canada does get delivered. The response will be forthcoming. The Throne Speech set out a mission for all of Canada. In four parts it talked of economic growth, of the environmental imperative, of a caring and compassionate society, and of a unified and distinctive Canadian identity. In many ways, Atlantic Canada will measure up to that Throne Speech challenge as a model.

In closing, I would like to make one more point about the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and to draw the parallel to the motion about economic devastation. Donald Savoie, the developer, or at least the author of many of the principles of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has been quoted several times today in context and out of context.

He credits the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency with avoiding the pitfalls of previous regional economic programs that poured hundreds and millions of dollars into white elephants, such as heavy water plants and importing outside industries that collapsed when the grants dried up. He said rather that "75 per cent of ACOA's money has gone to locally based ventures valued at less than \$200,000 and 90 per cent has gone to aid projects of less than \$1 million." He said that: "they have done"—and he is referring to the Government—"an excellent job in building up credibility with local entrepreneurs, so I think the question should not be whether ACOA spends the remaining half a billion dollars in three years or five years, but how it spends the remaining money." That remaining money is going to be well spent developing entrepreneurs, developing economic prosperity in the Atlantic region. I undertake, and my colleagues from Atlantic Canada and this Government undertake to ensure that that does happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments. The hon. member for Moncton.

• (1730)

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, I assume from the Hon. Member's comments that Atlantic Canada has been so well represented that he thinks it fair that VIA has nine protected routes and that none are in Atlantic Canada. Does he think it fair that CNCP is allowed to abandon routes in Atlantic Canada immediately while western routes are protected until the year 2000? Is it fair that ACOA will be cut back and spread over a longer period of time just when we need it the most? Is it fair that people will be in corridors of hospitals rather than in beds that are waiting there to be manned and looked after? Is it fair that the Government cut back on our educational institutions which need support so that we in Atlantic Canada can educate our children and make them productive members of Atlantic Canada society? Are we well represented by a government that does those things to Atlantic Canada? I submit we are not but I presume that Atlantic Canada Members think that that is in order.

Mr. Bird: Mr. Speaker, if all of those emotional and dramatic analogies were absolutely accurate, it would not be fair. It is unfortunate that this Government has had to take the financially responsible steps of addressing itself to the deficit and interest cost problems and has had to restrain the momentum of its activities in many ways. It is also unfortunate that we cannot continue to be all things to all people such as in the retention of a VIA