

Supply

He then goes on to say in the very last paragraph:

It is critical that any analysis of their effectiveness—

That is the study.

—take place in a forum where the provincial Governments fully participate in determining the objectives, scope and execution of the work, as has been the traditional approach, and as we envisaged when we signed a Memorandum of Understanding a year ago. Therefore I request that the present federal study not be proceeded with and that future work on this matter be conducted jointly.

In effect, we have the same message from the Minister of Transport of Prince Edward Island who reviews the history and says:

Dear Mr. Pepin:

It has come to my attention that your Department plans to undertake, unilaterally, a study of the westbound subsidy programs under the Maritime Freight Rates Act—

On the second page he goes on to say:

—I find it quite alarming that your Department would proceed with a comprehensive analysis of it which would consider the "removal or partial removal"—

There is no doubt the terms of reference are definitely directed to removal or partial removal of the subsidy program. He continues in his letter:

—of the subsidies without consultation with or input from the Provinces.

In effect, the Minister of Transport for Newfoundland says the same thing, that there was no consultation prior to the awarding of the contract; and he says in his letter of April 5, 1983:

—the Province of Newfoundland in this issue has not been consulted and is deeply disappointed.

In the last paragraph the Minister of Transport for Newfoundland says:

I believe Transport Canada should reaffirm its commitment to joint cooperative transportation planning and commence honouring that commitment.

The answer the Minister gave me in May, Mr. Speaker, was reassuring; he had hundreds of millions of dollars to spend and "we try to do it together". Yet in his Department, somewhere in his files, there were these letters from four Ministers of Transport who were saying the direct opposite and chastising the Minister for going ahead unilaterally with a fundamental study of the Maritime Freight Rates Act in which the Atlantic Ministers of Transport were not involved, contrary to the memorandum of understanding which the Minister himself had directed me to in those dulcet tones which were supposed to seduce me, and did in part, until I received this correspondence. It is the first time I have had correspondence which is so directly contrary to the soothing answers and statements by the Minister on something which is so fundamental.

We do not have to have a study, Mr. Speaker; we know from Mr. Craig Dickson, the General Manager of the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission, and Mr. Elwood Dillman, who is the Chairman of the Commission, from statements they have already given to the papers, and I know

as an Hon. Member representing my area, as do other Members from Atlantic Canada, that there are so many industries—mine are based on the land; my friend's from South Shore are more based on the sea—that are so marginal. It may not be the hundreds of millions of dollars the Minister is talking about, but if that subsidy was removed, I can predict today, as Mr. Dickson and Mr. Dillman have, who are outside of this House and very experienced people in transportation, there will be industries which will go down the drain.

We have areas which are going to be adversely affected by the removal of a structure which has given us help through a consultant's report—and I can go through it. It is an Ottawa consulting firm. We are very concerned with the terms of reference.

My time is almost up and I come to the last part of my question that day when I pleaded with the Minister. In view of the fact there is this difference of opinion on how the study started, there is real concern from the Ministers about how it started. There was no consultation. Read the terms of the study and you will see it is very definitely directed to removing in part or totally the intra and external westbound subsidy.

I could go through all this in another speech, but I plead with the Minister to be a little more direct in answering the last question I asked him so as to ensure that there is a chance for public input in any study. I do not mind a study if the study is not going to have binding conclusions which are going to eliminate something which we feel is as fundamental as the people in the West feel about the Crow.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the answer the Minister gave me in May, when I asked for public input—that is, public input from the people who are hurt, who are going to be hurt, not just Ministers of Transport behind closed doors—was this:

Yes, there will be consultation at least with the Governments of the Atlantic Provinces.

There has to be more, Mr. Speaker. There has to be consultation and meetings and a chance for Atlantic industry and Atlantic businessmen to be heard on whatever the report is which these consultants dream up within the closets of the bureaucracy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order. It being five o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Section (11) of Standing Order 62, proceedings on the motion have expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 2(2), this House stands adjourned until Tuesday next at eleven o'clock a.m.

At 5 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.