

whether there is something I can do to get his son a job. He cannot help him finish college and get his degree. He will join the ranks of the unemployed. The father can neither employ and pay him nor assist him with college. That is the result of a declining economy and its impact on what was a prosperous business.

I can cite another retailer who gave me the message that in order to survive he had to dismiss an employee who had been in the family business which he now manages for 26 years. He said they have reached the point where they have to cut to the bone. Otherwise, they will not be able to sustain themselves or employ anyone in the future. They must therefore take measures which are most unpalatable. Dismissing an employee with 26 years seniority was very unpalatable.

That in part was caused by government policy. First, there was a change in the taxation structure. His profit picture no longer looked as good as the bank would have liked, so it lowered the boom. Second, there was an attack on profit by the government, supported by the NDP. There go the jobs. There is a difference between the practicalities of society, whether it be economic or social, and a particular and specific philosophy applied to the letter. This is what is happening here.

We have a philosophy that profit is a bad word, but we are not prepared to assess the consequences of the total application of the policy, whether it be in the oil industry, the farming industry, the forest industry, the fishing industry, or small business. They must have profit if they are to stay in business. They cannot under any circumstances expand without it. Profit has become a dirty word and this government has attacked it, supported by the NDP.

I now want to discuss a problem New Brunswick has had and the competence of people in this House to do something about it. The Department of National Defence has chosen to close down the Chatham air base. They have chosen to close down a plant which by reputation has perhaps the best weather of any eastern air base in Canada. That is number one. It is rather ironic that one would pick the best weather location and close it down. Second, it has closed one of the most tactfully and tactically located defence bases in Canada as it relates to the defence of eastern Canada. Once again we find ourselves in a contradictory situation. No matter what may be said by government officials trying to justify this closure, that is the appraisal of that base by experts in the field of defence. Therefore, that is not an excuse.

Their third reason, and I suppose it relates to the tactical location of the place, is that it is within the range of the flyway of Russian planes coming across Canada, and from the point of view of defence that is a very significant factor. In spite of those three major plusses of the location of a particular air base, it is being wiped out.

The fourth item which should be taken into consideration is the impact it made upon that beautiful community lying in the estuary of the Miramichi and the way it has been assessed by the people of New Brunswick. The people of New Brunswick do not write a lot of letters to their members of Parliament, but they do write some. I have a thicker file from the constituency of Carleton-Charlotte on that particular subject matter

Taxation

than on virtually any other such matter in my time in this House. I have received letters from mayors of villages, towns and cities as well as from individuals objecting to the hardship that is being unnecessarily imposed upon the town of Chatham.

I wish to read some parts of an editorial in the April 24 edition of the *Saint John Telegraph-Journal*:

It is not often that the government and the opposition in the New Brunswick legislature agree on something. But the two parties joined unanimously this week in endorsing a strongly worded motion which calls on the federal government to ensure the future of Canadian Forces Base Chatham—

The economic facts as cited in the legislature, speak for themselves: The Chatham base payroll amounts to \$30 million and there is an economic spin-off estimated at \$17 million; the base provides 1,550 jobs; and the base personnel, along with their families, account for half the population of the town.

The Miramichi is already hurting badly because of the economic slump, with unemployment reported running at 44 per cent—probably closer to 50 per cent when those on welfare and those who have dropped out of the work force are counted, according to the Chatham MLA.

The Canadian Mental Health Association of New Brunswick has also warned of the social impact if more people are thrown out of work by the closing of the base. Association president Dr. Leandre Desjardins had this to say: "I don't believe anyone can challenge that job loss will mean more social, health and welfare costs along with a great deal of human suffering".

I come to the power of the backbench in an opposition or government party. I want to mention it in association with Chatham and relate it to one other instance which will indicate that the members of Atlantic Canada who serve on the backbenches of the government of this day had their chance to resist. We watched them vote on the VIA Rail issue en masse, except one absentee from New Brunswick, in support of the cancellation of VIA Rail. If they had made a strong case in their caucus, that VIA Rail service would still be operating from Halifax, through Moncton, Saint John, Sherbrooke and into Montreal. Here we have a complete departure from responsibility when we talk about throwing 1,550 people out of work in an area which, according to the local MLA, already has 40 per cent to 50 per cent unemployment.

● (1620)

Now, the member for London West was saying that we should not complain about government efforts to cut back cost. We do not complain about government efforts to cut back cost in a rational way, but this does not exercise a saving in a rising budget, scheduled to rise on an annual basis; and now we are not going to save that money, we are simply going to spend it elsewhere. I understand the bulk of it is going to go to Bagotville, Quebec. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker that this is a gross and negligent act of bad faith with the voters from Atlantic Canada.

My constituency happens to consist of a fishing, farming, forest community and all of the little businesses that are associated with it. Some of them are not directly associated with the fish, farm and forest industry; some of them are producers of goods and services required outside the constituency. I have already mentioned the lay-offs in the forest industry; I have mentioned the difficulties with small business. I have not mentioned the difficulties the farming community is