

Adjournment Debate

and it is unfortunate that it ignored the housing needs of families and senior citizens when it decided two months ago to distribute the funds allocated by the federal Government.

● (1810)

[English]

EMPLOYMENT—ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO NOVA SCOTIA RIDINGS. (B) AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, a couple of months ago I raised a question in the Chamber with respect to the cutting off of funds which were allocated to a program which happened to be occurring in Dartmouth, though it was a metropolitan area program. It dealt with and related to affirmative action designed to assist women entering the work force and women desirous of re-entering the work force, once they had left it for one reason or another. The funding was cut off quite unilaterally, arbitrarily and suddenly.

Perhaps the funding of projects of this nature should be dealt with at arm's length but this program has particular significance because it dealt almost entirely with members of the black community. I am rather curious about why this would have happened at a particular point in time when funds were privately and secretly being made available to Liberal Members of Parliament for whatever projects they wanted.

At the same time, I was very curious and will continue to be curious in the weeks ahead about the decision process behind the decision of the Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso (Mr. MacEachen), the distinguished senior Minister from Nova Scotia, to cause massive disruption in the lives of students attending the Nova Scotia Nautical Institute. He decided unilaterally that he wanted that institute to be located within his constituency in a place called Port Hawkesbury. I suspect he wanted it there because he will not receive the pipeline activity for his constituency which he thought he might receive this election year. Let us not deal with that but with the Nautical Institute.

The Nautical Institute has been located in Halifax for 112 years. Four thousand students pass through its doors annually. It is the principal and indeed only nautical institute of its kind for the private sector in Atlantic Canada. It is the place to which seamen, engineers, mates, mates seeking master's papers and all of those seamen who must have emergency training must go. It is located in Halifax because Halifax is the centre of marine activity in Atlantic Canada.

Halifax is the most active port in Atlantic Canada and it is the university centre for Atlantic Canada. To become a master seaman today, one must have an extraordinarily high level of knowledge of marine law. Dalhousie University is located in Halifax. To move the marine institute from Halifax to Port Hawkesbury would be to deny students access to that institution which offers the help they need.

Perhaps the Parliamentary Secretary can tell me why it was that the universities were not consulted, the shipping companies were not consulted and the officers of Bedford Institute of Oceanology which has exchange services were not consulted?

Why were Fisheries and Oceans and other government Departments closely associated with the Nova Scotia Nautical Institute not consulted? Above all, why were the 4,000 students, 90 per cent of whom live within a half-hour's commuting distance of the school, not consulted? Does it not matter that a man spends two months at sea, comes home for the purpose of upgrading his certificate and is forced to move 200 miles away from his family, when in fact his livelihood keeps him away from his family? Why were the students not consulted? The students at the Nova Scotia Nautical Institute want answers to questions like that. Was there a quick fix?

● (1815)

Where was the Hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Regan)? Did he give up an \$18 million project for a \$5 million federal contribution toward a \$50 million white elephant in the heart of an area already congested with traffic in the City of Halifax? Did he even know about it? Did he enter into a deal, a *quid pro quo*, so to speak? Talk about conflict of interest, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Parliamentary Secretary tell us why this matter cannot be suspended; why any further movement should not be taken until such time as the students, the teaching staff, the institution, the shipping community, and government departments are all consulted so a rational, sensible decision can be made? The institute must be replaced and renewed and it should be renewed in the metropolitan area of Halifax-Dartmouth somewhere, not on the Strait of Canso at Port Hawkesbury, depriving 90 per cent of the students daily access to their homes and families.

Mr. Jean-Guy Dubois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it would be a pleasure to answer the question put by the Hon. Member but I am afraid there is some misunderstanding about it. The answer I have in front of me is to a question that the Hon. Member put to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) on February 23. That is not the question he put just now. I am afraid I do not have an answer for the question he just posed. The question listed for the late show, and which was submitted to the Department, was about a problem on February 23, not about the school and the students that the Hon. Member referred to. I will be very pleased to answer the question the Hon. Member just put by letter, but right now I will give the floor to another Member who has a question on the late show. Perhaps I can discuss this with my colleague.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): For the purpose of clarification, I should say that the question announced for discussion tonight by the Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) was Allocation of funds to Nova Scotia ridings, Affirmative action program funding, and the reference is *Hansard*, February 23, 1984, pages 1669 to 1670.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.