What in fact is the at and east legislation or Bill C-26? In 1960 the Liberal government realized that various subsidies had to be put in place in order to help the areas at or east of Buffalo to compete with American ports and harbours which were sending grain to Europe and other areas. Also, it was to help them compete with Montreal and the harbours in that area. All grain subsidies were looked at and there were some rules set aside.

Some rail rates were put in place so that communities at and east of Buffalo would be able to reasonably compete with other areas of the country. The ports that were eligible for at and east until last summer were Halifax, Montreal, St. John's and areas east of Montreal. The grains that were subsidized at that point were wheat, wheat flour, oats, buckwheat, barley, rye, corn and soya beans.

We all recall the budget of March or April 1989 when the Canadian government seemed to change its total perspective on what was happening in agriculture. The legislation that came down at that point must have been written by the Minister of Agriculture in the United States. If we stop and think about what in fact it stated, in 1989 it removed $90 million from crop insurance programs across this country. This year it will be $110 million. It changed our branch line rehabilitation or our rehabilitation of rail lines that carry agricultural products by $46 million in 1989 and $2 million in 1990. It changed our advance payments to crops in 1989 by $27 million and in 1990-91 it was the same, $27 million.

Dairy export subsidies were cut by $5 million in 1989 and $7 million in 1990. The farm credit cuts were $6 million in 1989 and $8.5 million in 1990. The fuel tax rebate was cut by $42 million in 1989 and $125 million this year. All of those cuts that were engineered after the free trade agreement were not designed for the betterment of Canadian agriculture but were designed for other reasons. All of those cuts were not done by the U.S., but by the Canadian government to Canadian farmers.

The at and east bill was put in place, a bill which cut $20 million in rail subsidies in 1989 and $40 million in total by 1990. The government says that it listens to Canadians. It may listen to Canadians but certainly its actions are anti what it hears. Its actions are very much against the Canadian agricultural community. These are actions very much against the solid environment that we had in agriculture and are bringing it down more and more.

Before the election the present government suggested Canada was in a very healthy condition. They were going to put billions of dollars into helping agriculture and billions of dollars for all kinds of programs. Suddenly, after the election, we saw a very bleak picture.

We heard all we could about the debt and the deficit. We heard all about all of the difficulties that have come about in Canada. Not once was that mentioned during the election campaign. Not once was the dire effect of this budget, which cut in almost every area of agriculture, ever mentioned. Was it part of the agenda for free trade? Many people in this country strongly believe that to be the fact. Was it something that was given up at a point? Many people believe that.

In 1985 the Atlantic Provincial Transportation Commission made some very strong statements about what should happen to the program at and east. It suggested the government take no action on the at and east because it would create some serious problems in Canada. Its warning suggested that the serious economic impacts would hurt agriculture, the longshoremen and the elevator system in the east, as well as across Canada.

It suggested that the loss to the maritimes alone, if the at and east program were removed would be $27 million. It suggested that hundreds and hundreds of jobs would be lost in the Atlantic provinces, let alone the hundreds of jobs that will be lost throughout Canada as a result of this program being cut.

Capital purchases for milling ports would be lost by those who are involved in the milling of grains, not only in Ontario but throughout the eastern area. Livestock feed for cattle will certainly escalate in price when the grains that are shipped there are no longer subsidized, but are shipped in at a much higher cost. Certainly, the elevator workers in Saint John have lost their jobs because of the closing of the major elevator there.

The at and east program affects not only the east, but Ontario as well. The Ontario Wheat Producers Marketing Board has made some pretty strong statements about the problems with the at and east program. The at and east program did allow orderly marketing for those who were involved in the wheat program, and if you were in an area where you harvested all of your grain within approximately a four week period, that grain was shipped to market.