

Supply

The Minister spoke about ACOA. He outlined all the fine things it has done and all the money it has put into the Atlantic economy. The little business man is the fellow who is being adversely affected by the recent decisions and cut-backs. They will try to tell us that it is aimed at the little guy. It is not. It is the big fellows who get the money out of ACOA, not the little guys. We say that is not fair, and not fair to Atlantic Canadians.

When we consider the cuts to the ERDAs and the amounts that either have not been announced or are being looked at again, we see there is a question of fairness or unfairness. The ERDAs dealing with agriculture and forestry have yet to be signed. It is creating a great deal of uncertainty and concern for Atlantic Canadian farmers and forestry workers. They are not sure what will happen to them.

When we look at hospitals and universities and our opportunity to pull ourselves out of the quagmire of unemployment, we see that universities are being cut. That is indicative of unfairness.

Hospitals in Atlantic Canada presently have beds, but they do not have the money to open wings. They have people literally in the corridors of hospitals. Now there will be more cuts. There will be more people in the corridors of hospitals. Is that fair to Atlantic Canadians? I again suggest it is not.

• (1250)

The Government's policy with respect to transportation seems to be that it is for planes, no trains or automobiles. There will be no trains in Atlantic Canada, or just one line running from Halifax to Montreal. This is totally unacceptable, both for passengers and for freight service. Is that fair to Atlantic Canadians?

One of the conditions of Confederation was that we be linked together. Are we trying to throw the railroad and the passenger rail service out of business so that all of the people will have an opportunity to travel on our dilapidated and deplorable Trans-Canada Highway without any upgrading of that roadway? All we are doing is creating a hazard to all motorists. If we are going to try to drive people and businesses to utilize trucking services, again that is going to put great pressure on the Trans-Canada Highway, which is totally inadequate.

As I said at the outset, it is a question of fairness. We in Atlantic Canada are prepared to do our share but we feel that there has been an unequal sharing of the burden of this deficit. I believe that it is proven from all of the facts and figures that we have talked about and will continue to talk about today, that Atlantic Canadians are bearing an unfair burden of the deficit problems, with the economic conditions as we find them.

I say with all sincerity that we Atlantic Canadians are tired of begging. We are tired of kneeling down and asking Ottawa or Upper Canadians for help and assistance. We look forward to the time when we can stand up and say that we are an equal partner in this Confederation and are an equal member in a have-province or a have-region, rather than a have-not province or region. With Government policies of unfairness to Atlantic Canadians, that opportunity will never be presented to us.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Rod Archibald, who is president of the New Brunswick Federation of Agriculture. I believe his comments really typify what all Atlantic Canadians, in particular New Brunswickers, feel. I quote: "I know New Brunswick has only 3 per cent of the Canadian population and maybe that's the problem. Perhaps the federal level thinks we are too insignificant to bother with. I believe being a Canadian gives me the right to be treated fairly and on the same level as all other Canadians. We are good farmers here in New Brunswick and given equal conditions we can compete, but the playing field must be the same for all Canadian farmers." I think the playing field has to be same for all Atlantic Canadians and all Canadians rather than the way it is set up now.

In conclusion, and given the importance of this debate and the great interest from all sides of the House, I would move, according to Standing Order 26(1), seconded by my colleague, the Member from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso (Mr. LeBlanc):

That the House continue to sit through the lunch hour today for the purpose of continuing consideration of the motion moved by my colleague from Gander—Grand Falls (Mr. Baker) now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The House has heard the motion. All those who object to the motion will please rise.

And more than 15 Members having risen: