

Supply

You build an infrastructure around these defence bases. I am sure that many Canadians have great memories of having lived on the Atlantic coast. Maybe some of them would never have had that opportunity had it not be for the defence establishments. I will say that the cuts to the six established communities with bases will affect 500 civilian positions, \$90 million in salaries in the economy and all the infrastructure that went with those six bases.

I have not heard what will replace it, even on an interim basis. I challenge the government. You cannot keep taking from economies and expect them to survive. Maybe you want them to go to the middle part of Canada. But Canada is Canadians helping Canadians. There are other areas in the tax system that I would rather have seen affected; the capital cost allowance, the capital gains that better off Canadians still have. There are many areas that this government has not even touched because it shows it is leaning towards upper income Canadians, the big companies and the United States under the free trade agreement at the expense of what I consider rural Canada and the primary industries.

When the minister was here, he in his speech talked only of ACOA. I do not want to argue with him on the cuts for ACOA. I would think while we are cutting infrastructure that he would perhaps take another look at what his ACOA is funding because there is no point in funding tourism if there is no tourism next year. Why not fund infrastructures that municipalities have been asking for? Why not go after areas where it helps more people than individual people under ACOA? It is only a thought, but I have seen programs that ACOA or DRIE has funded or MAGI. I think it developed Halifax. It gave a rejuvenation to downtown Halifax at that time. There may have been some things wrong with it, but anyone who goes to Halifax would say that it started the development of Halifax and an interest in the downtown waterfront.

At the same time that I talked about ACOA, the minister wanted to aim at different people and he aimed at one of the leadership contenders. The leadership contender he aimed at has formed a new policy which the minister might like to read on regional development that gives a new attitude. If there are tight restrictions let us look at the money as examples of regional needs. He cited better transportation and communication systems, education and training programs, energy supplies, health care and public administration services. He also said—I

do not want name him but I will—the leadership contender he was talking about was Mr. Chrétien. He also said at the time that he would work closely with provincial governments in slow growth regions to increase better public investments in necessary infrastructure.

In all my experience in Parliament as a back-bencher over there and as an opposition member here, I have never seen a government more directed to destroying the infrastructure and economies of the regions. This motion today is timely. We should be debating this in committees and we should be talking about the direction that this government is taking Canada, whether it is with the free trade agreement, the GST or the cuts to VIA. There is no replacement. We do not see that our roads are going to be any better. We do not see Air Canada servicing more people. In fact, Air Canada is going to cut back in Saint John and Sydney. It is going to cut back in other areas of Canada.

The government thinks things have to be run like a business. There is nothing in here that we want to touch. We are going to sell it all. Forget Canadians. Look at the post office. I sat in committee today with the minister responsible for the Canada Post. He said to one of my colleagues that you do not want uneconomic things. I would have liked to have asked him to define uneconomic things. Are we talking about the rural post offices that are closing? Are we talking about the fact that Canadians, when they hear of their post office closing, would like to know how much it costs for that single post office? We don't know. We cannot even know what it costs to lease the post office in a community versus the cost of putting it into a business. And yet we are supposed to say this is all a standard of service that this government is giving Canadians.

The problem is this is all the infrastructure across rural Canada. I do not think—and I think I share this with my colleagues here—that the parts can be weakened without weakening the whole. As I see this government directing policies towards the big centres and towards centres away from the rural areas, you will find more and more that we are slowly losing Canada and it is becoming an area of regional disparities. This motion today shows that. I hope that the government and the ministers who are responsible will start looking at programs directed towards the regions. We need infrastructure. If you take from our area we need to have at least access to that