

other parts of Canada, there has been concern about fundamental change to the Crow legislation.

Before I get into that, I would like to compliment my colleague, the Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall), in whose name this resolution is put. As Members know, today is what is called supply day, a day when the Opposition can pick a topic and debate it. It serves as a substitution for discussion of estimates in Committee of the Whole and it affords an opportunity for Members to debate and express their points of view and points of interest. Frankly, it would be much more real if there was to be a vote at the end of the motion. This is one procedure where there is debate without a vote.

The Hon. Member's resolution is so general and so good that I would think that if it was to be voted on, as long as it did not bring down the Government, I believe that almost anyone would be prepared to vote for it. The motion reads:

That this House recognizes the need for long-term solutions to the economic difficulties facing Atlantic Canada and, although welcoming the injection of funds provided under the Special Recovery Program, rejects the manner in which those funds are being allocated particularly the decision to use partisan advantage rather than need as the basis for the provision of funding, and condemns the Government for its failure to adopt policies which would create lasting economic growth with permanent jobs and investment in Atlantic Canada.

I certainly subscribe to that whole-heartedly.

I do not intend, Mr. Speaker, to take any time talking about what other Members have talked about, the partisan nature of the allocation of the Special Recovery Capital Projects. I think that that topic has been covered very well. I agree with my friend from Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) who said that the need is for the creation of permanent jobs.

The resolution says that lasting economic growth is required. That is the subject I wish to discuss because there can be much pump priming and porkbarrelling and as many press announcements of Special Recovery Capital Projects which will last a finite time to provide much needed employment in a time of economic difficulty, and those are good; but they are just the old provisional, proverbial, band-aid approaches.

I compliment the Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East and the Members for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain) and South Shore (Mr. Crouse) in particular who, along with other Members, have contributed to this debate. They have focused on something that we in Atlantic Canada have but something that is under a real threat in terms of change. This gives us concern because we are not afraid of change if it is to be constructive change, but change for the sake of change and change that is stimulated and defined in the hallways of the bureaucracy gives us real concern. Of course, I am talking about the Maritime freight rates matter.

I think the timing of this debate is most interesting, Mr. Speaker, because there has been a preoccupation with western problems, be they energy problems under the National Energy Program that has devastated so much of the oil and gas industry of the land, or more recently and topically, the changes the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) has brought in

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to, in effect, fundamentally change the Magna Carta of the West, the Crow legislation. I believe that now is the time that Atlantic Members in particular from all sides of the House must be careful that, among the larger issues affecting Crow and energy and the general economic climate, some of our specific concerns do not get lost in the shuffle.

I have a unique opportunity this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to show you how something can get lost in the shuffle in the answer of the genial Minister of Transport. I will confront him with an answer he gave to a question I asked on Monday, May 9, 1983. I asked him that question in particular that day because that was the day the Crow legislation was introduced, although there were some difficulties getting it launched.

I asked the Minister a very direct question that dealt with having the Crow rate changed in a manner that would be deemed in the best interests of all of the country, not just in the best interests of two of the western Provinces. Even though that was western Canada's Magna Carta, I did not want to lose sight of what we in Atlantic Canada have, that old Maritime Freight Rates Act which goes back to the 1920s. Quite frankly, although it is not tied up in constitutional amendments, procedures and protection, the freight rate in Atlantic Canada, though it has been eroded away, is just as important to the East, philosophically and economically, as the Crow rate is to the West. As the Government plays with the big numbers in the West, the Atlantic freight rate might get lost in the shuffle. While the numbers in the East are not as big, they are just as important.

Because of that, Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister a question that in effect dealt with the concern that his Department's study to review the Maritime Freight Rates Act had brought protest from three Provinces, and perhaps I will read the question. I asked:

Has the Minister received the protest of four provincial Ministers of Transportation about the narrow terms of reference, very narrow timeframe, and lack of public input to this study, and what does he intend to do about this?

I rarely get the chance to dissect a Minister's answer after the event with information that has come to my hand. Part of the Minister's answer is as follows:

Madam Speaker, my information is quite different. I understand two Atlantic Provinces have agreed, one has remained neutral, and one has disagreed . . . The studies and review of the nature indicated by my hon. friend are the type of thing we try to do together, namely, attempt to spend as well as we can—

Pay careful attention to this, Mr. Speaker, in view of what I will read into the record in a moment:

—the hundreds of millions of dollars in support the federal Government gives to the Atlantic Provinces in matters of transportation.

He said hundreds of millions of dollars. Well, I will refer him to his own terms of reference for this study, and since we are on the topic I will do it now. The document I have in my hand is titled, "Terms of Reference, MFRA/ARFAA Subsidy Program, Industry Impact Analysis", Transport Canada, dated December 1982. In describing what is meant by Maritime freight rates, the terms of reference said:

There are two components to the subsidy program—