

• (1240)

If that is not hypocrisy, I do not know what is. There is a senior minister of the Crown saying in *Hansard* that the need for Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation is because it is a nation-building measure. What do we have today? We have the likes of Bill C-93 which will gut, it will terminate Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation forever and a day thereby removing a nation-building measure.

I find it totally unacceptable that we in this Parliament would allow this government to get away with such mischief. It is mischief which has played on the hearts and the hopes of thousands of people residing in my district.

The purpose of my intervention today is to retrace the history and the facts relating to Cape Breton Development Corporation, the history of the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation as it relates to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the facts. The facts are that we have been told one thing and the government is doing the opposite.

When I think of the concern and the anguish that the people of my island have to go through, I become angry. I am angry at the way in which they have been treated, angry at the way in which governments have played with their fears, their emotions and their hopes.

As we heard in Question Period and as I reported to the Minister of Finance, the unemployment rate in Cape Breton today is 20.9 per cent. On the very day that unemployment at 20.9 per cent is recorded, the Government of Canada spells the end of the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation. That is something which it said several years ago was a nation-building measure. Is that fair? Is that just? Is that appropriate?

My colleagues, the hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys and the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, will talk about what has happened in their districts.

Over the last number of years we have seen many destructive economic things happen on the island of Cape Breton. The radar base closed. A substantial amount of money was removed from the local economy. Positions at the coast guard college, the numbers are down. VIA Rail passenger service has been taken away. Air Canada jet service has been taken away. Just the other day, two fish plants in my district had to close as

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did many more on the island, to which I am sure my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso will allude.

Cape Breton Development Corporation has seen its person-years reduced substantially. The Sydney Steel Corporation has also been downsized from 1,500 to approximately 600. It goes on and on and on.

In 1991 Nova Scotia had 2,184 consumer bankruptcies. There were also 662 business bankruptcies. In October 1992 the record will show that consumer bankruptcies equalled 1,617 and business bankruptcies so far this year are up at 712. Bankruptcies since 1991 have reached a total of 5,175. Yet the Government of Canada has chosen a pretty tough course by closing down Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation. Again I ask the Chamber and I ask the Chair: Is that fair, is that just?

The answer is that it is not fair. It is not generous. It is not becoming of any national government to do that in light of the economic carnage it has inflicted upon the people. No government should wilfully, as this government has done repeatedly over the last number of years, single out such a poor and devastated area of Canada as Cape Breton.

There are people there too. I think of the youth. I think of my son and my two daughters who live there as I do. They want to have an opportunity to grow, get an education, have a job and raise a family. What we find is a national government, aided and abetted by the way by a provincial government, whose incompetence is only exceeded by its arrogance and dislike for the people on that island.

Today in my district two coal mines are down. One is Lingan in New Waterford and the other is the Phalen colliery in New Waterford as well. A lot of miners, a lot of families, are directly affected and impacted. The problem is that water has come into the Lingan mine and they have had to evacuate that mine which was due to close in March. Approximately 350,000 to 400,000 tonnes of coal will not be mined as a result of that flooding. A lot of individuals have been displaced there and displaced at the Phalen colliery.

I do not know the cause of that flooding, but I have serious concerns as to why it has occurred. I have spoken with union representatives and I have spoken with management representatives. They have suggested that the water has come from another abandoned coal mine, No. 26-1B. There are two experts on site now examining the cause. It certainly has to reflect management practic-