

Without getting too provocative at this stage in terms of all that has happened with at and east and all the offsets, the amendment of the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex to put this off until 1995 would give time for all the studies that should have been made before the decision to cut the subsidy.

The only real way to get to members in the House and the bureaucracy—hopefully many of them are watching this debate—is this. What happened is that some bureaucrat in the Department of Finance who was looking for fiscal control and subsidy reduction picked on something that no one really understands.

Mr. Speaker, I know you hail from west of the lakes. You have that great bread basket of grain between the lakes and Alberta. Then, you go into the lowlands of Alberta where they grow grain and raise cattle. There are the Rockies, which are beautiful. The country is beautiful.

In a budget bill, without consultation with affected parties, a Minister of Finance would not dare to attack, reduce and/or eliminate—which is what is being done with at and east—the Western Grain Transportation Act. The only way to put this into perspective is to state that this is our mini “western grain transportation act” in Atlantic Canada. It has been there for more than 20—some years.

Why should we accept this quietly as fiscal control and deficit reduction when there is another subsidy program for western grain going to Thunder Bay and in particular to the port of Vancouver? Nothing is being done about that, except that it is being studied. At least it is being studied. Of course, under the act it has to be studied before the government moves. There may be very necessary changes made.

Anyone involved in that debate knows there has been a continual question of whether the money should go to the railways or to the farmers. At least it is being studied.

My time is pretty well up. We are moving retroactively with this bill. This amendment will just delay the matter for two years while all the studies are being completed. It should have started anyway.

Certainly, I fully support the amendment and hope that other members will too. Quite frankly, it fits in with what the government is thinking. It is not a great defiance of a government. We should sometimes have cross court and cross aisle areas of concern where

members from a region can join together. The easy thing is for a member to avoid the vote on this measure. As members know, one takes parliamentary flu from time to time to avoid a vote on a matter of general interest where perhaps one is not settled in his or her mind. On something that is so precise, that so affects Atlantic Canada and also transportation, with which I am somewhat involved, I cannot stay silent on this bill. I support the amendment and certainly intend to vote for it.

**Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi):** Mr. Speaker, if you would like, I would be happy to sit down and allow my colleague, the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants, to carry on for a while because he certainly made a lot of sense.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dionne:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Dionne:** In any case, this is not a joking matter. It is a matter of very serious concern to Atlantic Canadians. Before the smoke clears, it will be a matter of very serious concern to this government, particularly members on the government side from Atlantic Canada who have not stood up and fought against this silliness. In fact, it may even be more cynical than that, it may be the punishment that this government wants to subject upon Atlantic Canadians because of the way they voted in the last election.

I had the opportunity to speak on second reading of this bill some months ago. I simply want to reiterate some of what has been said with regard to the importance of the at and east to Atlantic Canada. We had two grain elevators in Atlantic Canada, one of which has now been mothballed because of the action of this government with this legislation. We have one elevator left in Halifax. It is the only source of flour milled in Atlantic Canada. Without it, it is at least highly unlikely that there will be any milling of flour in Atlantic Canada.

The livestock industry in Atlantic Canada is vital to the agricultural sector. Without elevators or access to those elevators for western grain, it is highly unlikely that the beef and dairy industry will remain as we know it in Atlantic Canada. We do not yet have sufficient grain productivity in Atlantic Canada to meet our needs. I am talking about feed grains, not just flour. The government is hitting us with a double whammy. Not only is it going to destroy our elevators and flour milling operations, but