

End contempt

I attended last night's (April 19) all candidates' meeting at the Days Inn in Bridgewater. My purpose was to question the Harper government's cuts to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) budget and the resulting program, facilities and jobs. Unfortunately Gerald Keddy was a no-show and therefore no answer was forthcoming.

The \$86 million in cuts to DFO over the next three years, on top of the previous cuts to DFO over the past five years, will severely cripple their work and make the recovery of wild Atlantic salmon all the more difficult. Already announced budget cuts will terminate the counting station at Morgan Falls this year. Eric Robichaud will retire this year and his job will not be filled. This will leave a big hole in the science department and will have a detrimental effect on the Southern Uplands. How long before word is received that the Mersey Biodiversity Facility will close? The \$86 million in cuts were before the additional \$11 billion cuts announced during the campaign to improve efficiencies in the federal government. Will the science department of DFO be contracted out? Will fish farms regulate themselves? Will any money be available to protect the wild Atlantic salmon in the Southern Uplands which are endangered?

All this while in excess of \$24 billion in tax cuts will be handed out to the big banks and oil and gas companies in the next four years. A total of \$2.2 billion will be handed over to Quebec on September 1 for harmonizing the sales tax in 1992! How many billions will it take to fight the two wars in Afghanistan and Libya? Thirty billion dollars to buy new fighter jets, \$10 billion to build new mega jails. All that largesse and nothing for programs, facilities and jobs for DFO in the fight to preserve the wild Atlantic salmon. The Conservative government was in contempt of Parliament for refusing to provide information to Parliament. ... Gerald Keddy was in contempt of due process by refusing to show up at the all candidates' debate. I say let's rid ourselves of this contempt on May 2.

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