

The Budget—Mr. Macquarrie

which, I am sure, will be interpreted by all Canadians as realistic and as maintaining Canada, whose growing economy makes the whole world envious, on the road of progress.

[English]

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Queens): Mr. Speaker, I think it is always a good thing, but especially in the closing hours of a debate, for one to abridge his remarks as much as possible. I will try to do that.

Many of my colleagues from the Atlantic region have in my opinion made most excellent speeches on the very important problems facing our part of the country. In my few minutes I wish to talk about one aspect only, and that is the relationship of the regional economy from which I come to the national economy. One of the fundamental responsibilities of the national government is to use its power, economic and otherwise, to minimize inequalities which exist as between regions in the country, and between particular regions and the country as a whole. Some of these regions suffer economic inequalities in large measure because of national policies. Therefore the responsibility of the national government becomes all the more sharp. It is all the more incumbent upon those of us from such areas to bring our legitimate complaints and our carefully thought out suggestions to the government's attention.

I believe that this government, through its policies, is diminishing its power to equalize the economic advantages and disadvantages in this country. I believe the whole confederation process was in part a measure for sharing economic wherewithal, and sharing advantages and disadvantages. My colleague from Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), or from Klondike South as he has facetiously been referred to did a good job in discussing the way in which the government has abridged its power to assist and to operate significantly in these areas.

I shall speak not of the power, and the diminution of that, but of the will to move in the direction of adjusting disparities between economic regions. I do not think that that will has been or is being shown. The parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) in my opinion made an excellent speech. Being a little more definitive, I would say that he did a fine job in arguing a very poor case.

I do not think that the strong point of the minister's Budget, or his Budget speech, was its attention to problems of regional economies

[Mr. Yanakis.]

or to measures that the government has taken in relation thereto. In the past we have made many suggestions as to improvements in the Atlantic region, where the disparities are becoming more acute. Many of us from time to time have pointed out instances where the government's actions have directly contributed to widening the gap which exists economically between Atlantic Canada and the rest of Canada. Let me cite in our own city of Charlottetown the closing of the Enamel & Heating Plant also to be mentioned are the closing of military bases such as the one at Goose Bay, and the closing down of H.M.C.S. *Queen Charlotte*.

If my colleague from Prince Edward Island had not dealt so well and so convincingly with the causeway deferment or rescheduling, I would have discussed it. We may come to a miraculous manifestation. Our causeway is going to be built just as quickly, while less money is going to be spent on it. A shorter season of the year is going to be used, and so on. Having listened to words to this effect, I wonder why such an inconsequential thing was even mentioned by the minister in his Budget night presentation.

We shall remember in Prince Edward Island this little exercise in semantics and we shall remember certain commitments which have been made as a result of explanations of what the minister said, when he was talking about his deferments.

History will record, and one need not adopt a partisan attitude to say this, that this government has never manifested concern for the Atlantic region, such as its predecessor manifested from its first days in office.

The former minister of finance has left the cabinet. But it would appear that his maritime outlook still lingers on. He said: "Assistance should be given to the maritimes who might wish to move to other parts of Canada where there might be greater opportunities". That is a little travel subsidy. I heard that the people of Bell Island in Newfoundland are going to come into this category. As they face their bleak economic future they will receive assistance in moving out.

I say, do not subsidize a program of pushing the maritimers out of the maritimes. Do something, rather, to push the region ahead economically so that our young people may be able to stay there and make their contribution to Canada in their own part of Canada. Why should we be the economic transients of this country, subsidized in our