

Atlantic Development Board Act

act through a federal loan announced the other day by the distinguished Minister of Fisheries as an achievement of his. He forgot to mention in his press announcement who instituted the legislation. However, there we have a coal burning thermal plant providing the extra energy needed to bring about some improvement in the economic situation in the maritimes. These were special statutes specially designed to meet special needs.

Then, of course, we had the massive outlay of capital through the Atlantic provinces adjustment grants. This matter has been discussed over and over again. However, I think that when we consider an amendment to this statute we must keep the matter in its fair and proper perspective and remember, to use the phrase of the Secretary of State, the ladder which was put there, I suggest, by the former government. If the Secretary of State wants to climb the ladder, God bless him; I hope he has a pleasant trip to the top.

Of course, on budget night the \$100 million fund had a serious blow because the producers of coal and lumber and those concerned in secondary industry in the Atlantic provinces were faced with an 11 per cent sales tax, which last night was up and down.

The Chairman: Order. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. gentleman but I think he realizes that on clause 1 we cannot have a discussion as general as that which we had on the resolution stage of the bill. The discussion should be limited, at least, to the bill. I realize—and I am not making a ruling on this point—that these matters are of concern to the hon. gentleman, but I would suggest to him that as far as possible he should try to limit his remarks to the bill which is now under consideration.

Mr. Fairweather: I thank you, Mr. Chairman; but we were discussing the fund, and I was trying, no doubt in a general way, to suggest that on budget night the fund was solvent, but that a fund which might have been adequate on June 12 is, of course, insufficient now because the cost of whatever we do in the Atlantic provinces has gone up. I was about to suggest that the fourth chapter of the gospel according to Gordon, whatever reading it was last night, has placed a serious dilemma before those people who are now making up the Atlantic development board because what was once an established fact has become a Liberal fantasy. However, if that is not in order I shall try to direct my attention more specifically to the fund. That was the general line of the idea, though. I was about to suggest that the fund for the

next few months should not be \$100 million but that 4 per cent should be added to it up to March 31 next, when, I understand from last night's announcement, we shall have to add 8 per cent to the \$100 million.

The Chairman: I can understand the hon. member wishing to try to bring into his remarks material which I consider does not really belong to a discussion of the principle of this bill. However, I would ask him to limit his observations to the subject matter before the committee.

Mr. Fairweather: If the added cost of the budget, Mr. Chairman, is not applicable to this fund I will direct the remainder of my remarks to the fund itself. But perhaps the point has been made.

I am one of those old fashioned people who believe the voting of money should be a parliamentary prerogative and that is why the setting up of a fund is viewed by myself and, I think by many others, to be mere window dressing. I am deeply concerned lest the \$100 million should, in fact, become a ceiling, an excuse for going no further. The hon. member for Victoria-Carleton neatly divided the fund this afternoon in an arithmetical way. I shall not try to copy him, but when one does divide such a fund between four provinces for five years, even a backbencher would hardly consider such a sum as being adequate. This causes me to worry about the size of the fund and to hope that the Secretary of State when we proceed to the further stages of the bill will agree to add some such phrase as "no less than" before the amount so that we in the Atlantic provinces will not have to be concerned that this is a confining figure. I think that is all I have to say, Mr. Chairman, because of your admonition which has corsetted me.

Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton): In the course of my remarks this afternoon I did make some reference to the fund and the amount of the fund. It seems to me that the points made by my hon. friend from Royal in connection with the reference of this expenditure again to parliament, or at least to the government, is well taken. I doubt the wisdom of placing as much money as this in the hands of any board, even though the government of the day might consider there was ample protection.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would not this particular discussion be more appropriate on clause 16 which sets out the safeguards and precisely meets the point raised by the hon. gentleman, because the board cannot spend this money without the approval of treasury board, which is the government?

[Mr. Fairweather.]