

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I just made an exclusion of your ranks.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): I didn't catch that.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I just said I am not talking about this part of the House, but some others are, definitely, and I don't want to play that game at all. I just want to say that they are not going to succeed the way they succeeded a few years ago; that is all.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, all I want to say—some do not agree but I don't care—is that I do not mind dying provided I feel it is for a good cause.

Here is a department honestly trying—even the hon. member for York South said so—to correct an extremely difficult situation without any doubt. We do not have at our disposal any instrument for that purpose. We can always try with grants. Furthermore, there are the ARDA and FRED programs. With DEVCO we are attempting to ensure development on Cape Breton Island.

We are trying to re-examine all programs, and we have made mistakes. It is really difficult to develop a strategy. We are told: You are not through, you are going against the recommendations of the Atlantic Development Council. It is not true, Mr. Speaker, and I said so in the House several times. I am opposed to one thing only, namely, to determine the number of jobs which will be created in the Maritimes within five or six years. I am opposed to it because I don't know what the answer is. In fact, here knows and any prediction in this regard will only tend to confuse the public and create false hopes. So I do not know. If 175,000 jobs can be created, I will be the happiest of all.

As far as everything else goes, Mr. Speaker, in terms of development strategy, objectives that have to be reached, growth centres, we are in full agreement with the Board and my Department is geared accordingly. I have no objections to criticism in that regard, Mr. Speaker. But I will not have it said that the special zone program is not sound, that we should not choose a city but rather a region; that we should not move in such and such a direction and that we have so much money to spend. The criticism should be knowledgeable and make allowances for the means and instruments at our disposal.

This is not the way the criticism goes. They say: Union Carbide has moved from here to there, the jobs have been transferred, bankruptcies have occurred, etc. This is the only thing that interests vilifiers, but they don't even know the dates of expiry or application of the different pieces of legislation.

I sincerely regret the waste of time incurred for the House and the nation with such childish, futile criticism while I am sure some of these people could express constructive criticism as they are both intelligent and knowledgeable. Since we are in a pre-election period, they probably are only interested in making political mileage and engage in mud-throwing. I am sorry, but I think the mud they are throwing will boomerang. I know there can be errors, I know our programs are not perfect, but I believe in the honesty of our people and I know that the adminis-

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tration of the department is irreproachable in trying to reduce regional disparities.

Then we are told: "You say that you have created 50,000 jobs, but it is not so." Is this clear, yes or no? It is very clear. All people have to do is peruse the documents: Everything is there in black and white.

The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) has a big deal. An official of the department probably tipped him off. A telephone inquiry apparently revealed that the number of jobs created under the previous plan was 19,000 instead of 40,000 or 45,000. That would mean that previous statements were not true. The inquiry covered only part of the previous plan which included three parts: grants, tax debates and corporation expansion.

The inquiry applying to the first part only could evidently not yield the maximum figure. It is strange that it should correspond exactly to the figure we had forecast for new ventures. As I have already told him, he does not know how to interpret figures. Nor do I, for that matter. I am not too good at it, but I have enough humility, when faced with statistics, to ask an expert to interpret them, instead of coming to the House to talk rubbish.

They may criticize my department in a constructive way, they may tell us what we should do to eliminate regional disparities, to try to neutralize the centripetal forces which play an important part in Canada. I do agree with that.

I have read the program of the New Democratic Party. Except for generalities, there is absolutely nothing in it. They do not propose any technical innovation nor any means of action.

They tell us: Why not concentrate your efforts on crown corporations? But what are we doing with respect to Multiplex at Saint John in New Brunswick?

• (1450)

What do we intend to do elsewhere where we had inquiries made and where we want to try new instruments? We will try them all. This cannot be done overnight. We may have had weaknesses, maybe we are not going fast enough. Let the criticisms bear on that, but I am not going to take the trouble of answering vague charges. Someone has said that there has been corruption and discrimination in the case of Quebec. That is what they say behind the curtains. I am not going to bother answering those insinuations. If anyone has anything to suggest, I am ready to listen to him for the greater good of Canada.

[English]

An hon. Member: Are you looking for an appointment?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Yes, I am going now—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald).

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to snub the hon. member, but I have to go now to an appointment. I shall read it in *Hansard*.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Hit and run!

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): No, I hit your boss and run.