

*Science and Technology*

an honest commitment to a national science policy, and nothing illustrates this more than the policy of drift which has characterized it since its inception.

These criticisms have been made much more authoritatively by experts outside the House whose observations have been alluded to by other speakers in this debate. Our function today on the occasion of this important initiative taken by the Progressive Conservative Party is to call the government to account for the absence of a national science policy in the light of the criticisms which have come from groups which possess the expertise to assess what has been done in the name of science policy in Canada.

● (2030)

I want to deal with four elements of the problems that are posed for Canada now by the absence of any over-all context of national science policy, and by the potential that exists for bringing science to the centre of national decision making in this country. I want to deal with the effects of technology on the environment; I want to deal with the effects of industrial strategy, and the related questions of population movement and the health of the variety and size of communities. I want to deal with the question of nationalism, of Canadian national identity and development; and I want to deal with the very serious problems of responding to some of the new problems which science brings in its wake.

Let me deal first with environmental matters. The "make or buy" policy of the minister of state, which has perhaps been the only success so far of that ministry, has created a tremendous opportunity for several departments to make use of the expertise that does exist or can be developed in the country. There is no department in this country which should take a more prominent role—and I say this with the parliamentary secretary here tonight—under this aspect of national science policy than the Department of the Environment. Yet far too high a proportion of research that is carried out under the head of the Department of the Environment is research that is carried out in house, which consequently misses the range of opportunity for cross-fertilization with scientists outside Ottawa and outside Ottawa agencies. We are missing the wide range of possibility for applying in a broad way techniques which might have been evolved to deal with specific problems. Probably—and this is particularly important to environmental questions and important across the range—we have missed the opportunity to be as sensitive as we should be to peculiar regional requirements in this country and to the peculiar differences of ecological and environmental concerns in different parts of this wide and diverse country.

This is because the government, in practice, in operating a department like the Department of the Environment, abandons the theory that is supposed to be the inspiring theory of the Minister of State for Science and Technology, and instead of going out as much as it should to the whole science community of the country concentrates too much on in-house research which is limited in range and in its applicability.

Let me deal for a moment now with the question of industrial strategy and what some of the very important

[Mr. Clark.]

consequences of that can be. The absence of any industrial strategy can result in consequences which are particularly important to regions such as mine, which is away from the centre of the country, and small communities such as those I represent, which are unfortunately increasingly away from the centres of growth and are being shunted out of the capacity for growth and development in the country.

It is possible to argue that we lack an industrial strategy in the country, and several people in the House have argued that today. A more grave danger is that in fact we have an industrial strategy which is unstated and unexamined; that is, an industrial strategy of simply following the status quo, developing where we are already developed and ignoring the rest, doing the things that we already do and ignoring the things that we might become more effective and more proficient in.

That kind of industrial strategy for a country like Canada is highly dangerous for at least two reasons. The first of those reasons is a regional one. I come from a part of Canada that has gone too long with a concentration of industrial development and a concentration of innovation in regions other than my region. There is clearly a concentration of industrial activity, innovation and development within the golden triangle of this country. There has not been an attempt made to try to spread industrial development and the options around either among my part of the country in western Canada, the Atlantic region or the home area of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Foster), who spoke a moment ago, namely in northern Ontario or indeed to the more remote regions of the province of Quebec.

There has simply not been an attempt in recent years to try to bring down the kind of industrial strategy that was developed by the late C. D. Howe. That shows up particularly in the capacity to challenge that kind of strategy, and the challenge that is particularly alive in the question of science policy is the challenge to effect some kind of change.

There is also a great environmental danger, because if we continue in this country to concentrate our growth where it is, whether that is in the regions or in the large cities, we are going to add immeasurably to the environmental problems we already have. We are already seeing serious consequences for the communities and people who live along the Great Lakes, particularly those developed areas of the Great Lakes. We are slowly killing those lakes and the areas around the large cities by concentrations of people and pollution.

It is clear that the dangers of pollution become more acute as more and more things get cramped into one area. So also it is clear that activities which might proceed with safety, were they alone, could proceed with danger if they are cramped into an area where there are other activities going on that could have dangerous consequences. There is very serious environmental danger in this lazy sort of planning or drafting of policies as we continue to concentrate Canadian growth areas where they already exist.

As I say, there is no activity of government and no aspect of national policy which holds a greater capacity to turn this trend around than a national science policy. Science can be the key to the opening up of new regions