

National Economic Development Board

a time when the latter body is beginning to render a service. If that is so, and if the government has given no real thought to a clear demarcation of responsibility between the two boards, this will turn out to be another fiasco. The setting up of a second board would derogate from any real accomplishment which might be rendered by either of them. If this is so, prominent citizens who now serve on the productivity council are going to resign. Should this happen, and should everything collapse in one horrible fiasco, how long would it be before any responsible citizen will sit on another board designed to come up with some policies and lead this country out of the wilderness?

It would be well for this government to take this duplication into consideration. The Minister of Finance should be forced to tell us in committee just what detailed plans this government has laid down to ensure that there is no overlapping of functions as between the two boards. I suggest, as was suggested in the *Globe and Mail* not too long ago, that the government should consider the complete integration of these two boards. No one here denies the necessity of a national economic development board; but at the same time no one wants duplication with the result that one or other of them may not be able to work effectively at all. After examining the similarity in the terms of reference and in the constitution of these two boards, let the government tell us what it plans to do to ensure that the morale of both these boards is not completely devastated at an early stage. The government must have read the annual report of the national productivity council in which the council indicated that it cannot effectively do the job until its powers are considerably widened. The council went on to say in its report that it intended during the coming year to take into consideration the whole scope of fiscal policy and make recommendations with respect to it. That statement can be found in the annual report. So if this government intends to have these boards working effectively together it should take this into consideration and be ready to answer questions put on this subject when we reach the committee stage.

I should like to refer, now, to the manner in which the Minister of Finance spoke when he introduced this bill. He talked, as did the last speaker, about the many fine programs taken up by this government over the last few years. As he spoke of them in such grandiose terms, it made us wonder whether the government sincerely felt that such a board was necessary. If that is so, I would ask why it was recommended by the government. Was it for nothing else but to delude the public?

[Mr. Munro.]

The minister talked of these programs. I would say—and there is no doubt in my own mind and I am sure the minds of the Canadian people as well—that there is tremendous need for a board to recommend policies which this government, or any other government for that matter, will adopt. This need becomes abundantly clear when one considers the tight money policy, with its resultant effects on lack of productivity, the declining economic growth of the country, the terrible investment lag, the terrible balance of payments position—almost \$1 billion a year—the increasing percentage of manufacturing industries which are controlled by foreigners.

An hon. Member: You worry too much.

Mr. Munro: When you take all those problems, can there be any doubt how terrible is the need in this country for a national economic development board which has been well planned in detail by the government before it is constituted?

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that I worry too much. I do worry too much. I think that when the Liberal party came out with a program for such a board, we felt it was important and would rid the country of unemployment. Therefore, can you blame any of us for worrying if this government sets up a board which brings the whole thing into disrepute? I say that that worry is amply justified in this case.

I say that the government should also take into consideration the overlapping duplication of services which may possibly occur not only between this new board and the national productivity council, but also between it and the national research council and the programs which are being instituted under the Department of Labour for vocational training. Such programs have always been within the terms of reference of both these boards. If this government has read the annual report of the national productivity council they will find that they have had discussions with the Department of Labour as well as the national research council. They have had discussions with the Department of National Defence, who are instituting research on their own, to try to co-ordinate all their activities. When we see this multiplicity of boards and programs all interwoven, surely it behooves this government to take into consideration the fact that all these programs must be integrated if the board named in this bill is to have any real influence in the country.

In conclusion, I should just like to comment on the question of planning. As the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Gordon)