

Atlantic Development Board Act

stage on behalf of the Secretary of State (Mr. Pickersgill). I say this because there are very few ministers in the present government who did more to destroy investor confidence in our area and, in fact, recently, in the entire dominion of Canada, than the present Minister of Finance. For example, in the preliminary report, dated December, 1956, of the royal commission on Canada's economic prospects, he quotes chapter and verse in illustration of our low average income per capita between 1935 and 1957 during the 22 years of Liberal government. Why did those men of vision not do something about those problems during that period? He said, and I quote:

Living standards are lower than they are in the rest of Canada, and it is in everyone's interest to reduce this differential... It is not suggested this should be accomplished by ad hoc projects and handouts; such measures are as unpalatable to the recipients as they are to those who must foot the bills.

That was not very encouraging, but the hon. gentleman continued by saying—and this is the part to which I take exception—

Even if assistance is provided for those people who might be willing to move elsewhere, many people undoubtedly would prefer to remain where they are, despite the handicaps referred to. People who so choose should at the same time be prepared to accept a different kind of life, or certainly life at a different tempo and lower levels of income.

It is evident we did not choose to follow his advice. In any event, this is not the kind of language which builds investor confidence. The hon. gentleman carried the same theme into other fields. For example, on page 103 of the same report he had a similar solution for the difficulties of our miners.

We believe, however, that generous assistance should be provided for the mine workers who will be displaced as a result of the difficulties which we foresee. Special measures will be needed for looking after these people and for re-establishing in other industries those who may be interested in such an alternative. It may be that such measures could be included under a broad national scheme referred to in the discussion about agriculture in section 3 for relocating people who may wish to abandon submarginal farms and be re-established in other industries. But the problem of the Nova Scotia coal miners and their families is a particularly difficult one which will require both a sympathetic approach and special treatment. We suggest that on economic grounds alone, having regard to the amount of the present subsidy, there would be every justification for paying the full amount of the transportation costs of all the members of any families who may be willing to move to other parts of Nova Scotia or elsewhere in Canada; for assistance in the provision of housing; and for training for other occupations, possibly in co-operation with industry.

In view of the statements made in the past by the present Minister of Finance, and in the light of his recent fumbled, bumbled budget, the house will readily understand our concern over any proposals he or his

[Mr. Crouse.]

government may make with regard to our future government. In my opinion, his statements destroyed investor confidence in the Atlantic area, and the present bill to provide the Atlantic development board with \$100 million is only a form of mild compensation on the part of the Liberal party in an effort to make up for 22 years of neglect. It is window dressing. I submit it is not enough.

Contrast the statement made by the hon. gentleman with the action taken by the Conservative government when it came to office in 1957. One of our first acts was to approve Atlantic provinces adjustment grants amounting to \$100 million over a four year period—a fact seldom mentioned by Liberal speakers. The impact made by these grants has been referred to this afternoon by the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton (Mr. Flemming). They were later increased to \$175 million to be paid over a five year period between 1962 and 1967. Armed with this extra money from the federal government, the provincial governments were in a position to expand their fishermen's loan boards, to create industrial estates and to provide capital for the much needed expansion of industry. It was a Progressive Conservative government under the leadership of the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) which for the first time in 22 years said to the people of the Atlantic provinces: We have faith in you; we put our trust in you; we have confidence in your ability to grow and develop in your own area, and we are going to provide you with help from the federal treasury.

When these promises were put into effect by the Conservative government, investor confidence was restored in the Atlantic provinces: And we needed to have confidence restored. After being told there was no help except a one way ticket to some other part of Canada, the Atlantic adjustment grants shone like a beacon through the fog of despair created by the Liberals. In 1957, there were few new industries being established in Nova Scotia and the pledge for federal help was like a spur to our people similar to the words of Winston Churchill on June 4, 1940 when he rallied the allies to the defence of freedom by his statement:

We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets; we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender!

That was also the battle cry of the Atlantic provinces—"We shall never give up".

This new approach on the part of the Conservative government completely changed the outlook in the Atlantic provinces. There are others here from the Atlantic provinces who, no doubt, intend to speak, so I shall deal only