

development in Cape Breton and more than \$50 million in the Cape Breton investment tax credit in addition to that. We have the ERDAs I mentioned earlier. This is not only going to big business. It is going to the farmer who can use the tax credit to put up a new barn or to acquire farming machinery. These are incentives not available in other parts of Nova Scotia but they are available in Cape Breton. They highlight the commitment of our Government to deal with a very serious economic problem in Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia. If money is the test of our commitment, then I point out to the critics that there has been a commitment of more than \$500 million to Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia.

The financial commitment of the Government of Canada is clear, but money is not enough. If money were enough our problems would have been solved decades ago. If the industrial development division of Devco were the answer, these problems would be solved. But the people voted for a new strategy. They have it. They have the money, they have the opportunity, and they have proven results. We see results in this region. These principles form the basis of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. Because of its success, I look at ACOA and to the future of Atlantic Canada with confidence and optimism knowing that, with this new opportunity, Atlantic Canadians will improve their economic lot. I look forward to passage of this Bill so that all of Atlantic Canada can get on with enjoying the benefits of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek the unanimous consent of the House to vary the order of speaking in this debate. I realize that Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition has the right to speak next and for unlimited time, but I would ask for the consent of the House that I be permitted to speak next for 20 minutes only, forgoing questions and comments. I do have to catch flight in a very short period of time. I would seek the consent of the House to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Papproski): Is it so agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I thank Hon. Members for granting their unanimous consent. It shows a spirit of co-operation that we have not seen in the House for the last few days. I am pleased to see it today.

I want to speak on this very important piece of legislation. I want to say at the outset that although I may not be present for a vote on this Bill, it would be my intention to vote in support of this legislation. I think it does a part of what needs to be done for Atlantic Canada. In saying that, however, I want to outline very serious problems I see with this Government's approach and its attitude toward regional development.

Perhaps it is best exemplified by a comment first made by the Minister of Public Works in March of 1987. In speaking to a construction management labour bureau in Halifax, the Minister is reported to have said that the Atlantic Canada

Government Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987

Opportunities Agency may be the last kick at the can as far as development programs for this region are concerned from a federal Government bent on financial efficiency. What has not been tried in the Atlantic region? Just about everything has been tried. That attitude expressed by a Minister of the Crown is, I think, a most shocking attitude when it comes to an important region of Canada. One would have expected that Senator Murray, the Minister responsible for this agency, would have repudiated that attitude when asked. But he did not. He confirmed it both in committee, when he was asked, and to the media.

On top of that attitude, we have an attitude which was expressed in this House the other day when the Bill at report stage was being debated with a number of important amendments being considered by the House. The Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) criticized and derided a member of the New Democratic Party for speaking in support of amendments to the legislation, for speaking in favour of regional development in Atlantic Canada, on the basis that the Member represented a riding in Hamilton, Ontario. The Minister for International Trade was joined in this attack by the Minister of State and Deputy House Leader. This was an attack on Members of this Party who were speaking out in favour of regional development for Atlantic Canada. These attitudes, which were expressed by four separate Ministers of the Crown, are part of the reason we recognize that this Government's approach to regional development is entirely different from what one would find on this side of the House.

What kind of problems are we dealing with when we talk about regional development? I look to the Economic Council of Canada, which stated in a press release on September 30, 1987, that the national economy is likely to expand in the coming years but uneven regional growth will be the country's major economic problem. It stated that a prime economic target for Canadians should be regionally balanced growth, job opportunities and social services. According to the Economic Council of Canada this is the major economic problem our country faces today.

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From what other economic body have we heard in the last year but the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development? In its annual report, which was released last August, it states that the starkness of regional disparity in Canada was especially noteworthy in the previous years. So not only does our own Economic Council recognize it as the priority problem in Canada, it is also recognized by the body which is composed of the 15 wealthiest nations in the world which does studies on economies and which makes economic predictions.

How do we treat it in Canada? How do Ministers of the Crown treat it? They say that this will be the last kick at the can, that we will try this for a few years and if it does not work it is all over. If people who are not from Atlantic Canada stand up in the House to talk about it and to bring it to the attention