

Dominion-Provincial Relations

million, this portion which is to be the special assistance grant or special fiscal grant, of great assistance. They will consider this a move in the right direction. I think they realize, as must the house, that a move of this nature, an amount such as \$25 million, is needed in the Atlantic provinces today because of the deteriorating economic conditions even more than it was when Mr. Hicks first made the suggestion less than three years ago. I feel that the real objective of the government should not be deficiency payments, if I may call them that, to the governments of the Atlantic provinces but efforts to bring about higher incomes for the people of the Atlantic provinces. Such higher incomes could be brought about, of course, by policies leading to industrial development. In other words, what we need to assist us in the Atlantic provinces are some imaginative proposals and policies.

I am thinking of one of the steps that was taken along that line only last year or to be more exact, less than a year ago. It was one of the most imaginative steps that has ever been proposed for the maritime provinces. I refer to the action by the then minister of northern affairs and national resources, the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet (Mr. Lesage) and the then finance minister, Mr. Harris, when they brought forth the thermal power policy for the Atlantic provinces.

I think of another step which was taken by previous Liberal governments within the last few years which resulted—

Mr. Fleming: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I say this. We are not discussing thermal policy, surely. This is a debate on the motion for second reading of this particular bill. It does not mention thermal power.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rea): I think I shall be obliged to remind the hon. member that he is a little off here. I have been listening to him very carefully.

Mr. Kirk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As usual I will bow to your ruling. I will say to you, if I may, and to the Minister of Finance that what I was trying to show was that in the past imaginative proposals have been put forward by previous Liberal governments, and I am trying to show that what we need in the maritime provinces is such policies rather than what I called a moment ago deficiency payments.

With that in mind I think there are several steps that could be taken which would be of assistance to carry out the purposes of the bill as outlined by the Minister of Finance. He said it is to authorize the payment of certain grants to the Atlantic provinces. In the course of his speech he spoke of the great

good it would do the Atlantic provinces, and he referred to the present unemployment situation.

I do not intend to go into details about the unemployment situation, particularly after the comments which were made this morning, but I would hope that some action would be taken or some policy developed which would relieve the present unemployment situation, improve the employment situation and bring about a higher per capita income to the people of the province rather than a higher income to the government of the province directly from the federal government.

I think one of the things that might and could be done by this government in these proposals would be to bring us up to date with respect to a survey of the natural resources of the Atlantic provinces, so we could make speedier use of our natural wealth and thereby raise the standard of prosperity in that part of Canada, and at the same time raise the income of the individual citizens. Another move we might make which would be of great assistance would be the development of an Atlantic provinces capital assistance fund for the purpose of financing those large projects which are essential for sound industrial development.

Mr. Fleming: I am sorry to interrupt my hon. friend, but surely this is not the proper time to debate other measures that might be of assistance to the maritime or Atlantic area. This surely is a debate on the second reading of this particular bill.

Mr. Pickersgill: If I might do so I should like to say just a word on the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Surely the minister has indicated, and it is indicated in the bill, that the purpose of this bill is to pay, as my hon. friend has put it, deficiency payments to the Atlantic provinces because the average income of those people is below the average income in the other parts of Canada. Surely we are not to be limited so strictly in debate here that an hon. member cannot rise in his place and say that, desirable though these deficiencies payments are, it would be more desirable still to bring these incomes up so that such payments were not necessary. That surely is addressing oneself directly to the principle of the bill, and I submit that my friend the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth-Clare is completely in order.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I say that I am bound to support the position taken by my friend the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth-Clare. Otherwise almost the whole speech I made this morning was