

Atlantic Development Board Act

the sentiments expressed by members from the various parties, I cannot in candour suggest that I feel the \$50 million is in any way an adequate amount. We surely have no difficulty in being convinced that the painful economic lag which has characterized the relationship of the Atlantic region to the rest of Canada is becoming more painful, that the gap is not in fact being narrowed. There are many economic indices which make this all too clear. The outstanding documentation of recent months, of course, is the second annual review of the Economic Council of Canada.

In the face of widening disparity and against the background of the expenditure or allocation of the \$100 million which was earmarked before, I am unhappy about the designation of an amount of \$50 million. I noted carefully what the minister said about the frequent return of this measure to parliament but I cannot believe that now the Atlantic Development Board has been launched on its way, changes have been made in its personnel and experience has been gained by its officers—and I join with my colleague from Kings in saluting its officers because Dr. Weeks and others are most excellent men—and with the background of the board's proven efficiency in the face of the growing need for assistance in the Atlantic area, \$50 million is sufficient. I would be much happier had there been allocated the first amount earmarked when the present government took office. We did not fix ceilings on the amount at all in our day.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I think the minister is anxious to have the measure proceed through this stage and we all sympathize with that desire. I should be interested in hearing him illustrate for us a typical project which might, in the words of the resolution, be "undertaken or financed" by the board. I have been trying to think of some projects which might conceivably come under the terminology of the last two and a half lines of the resolution. I must reiterate my belief that \$50 million is not sufficient. You cannot redress the economic grievances of generations by \$50 million and heaven knows there have been grievances in so far as the Atlantic provinces are concerned. I hope that the minister will not say to me again that my affluence is such that I sneer at \$1 million, because I would never join those who say "what's a million?". A million dollars is a good deal of money but it is not so much if used to alleviate great problems and the longstanding inequities of our region. I do

wish the amount had been \$100 million and I hope that this comparatively small figure will not act as a depressant in our region.

The establishment of the board and various other projects which were undertaken, especially in 1957 and 1958, have done a good deal of stimulate that which is essential to our prosperity, namely, vigorous self-activity in the economic field. Fine things have been done by the provincial administrations and the boards they have set up. However, I know they would all agree that the action of the federal government, the body which must be concerned about equalizing the economic opportunities of all regions, has given them a great start. I hope that this diminution of the figure will not depress those who in the region itself are moving forward vigorously in concert toward our continuing progress. As my hon. friend from Kings has said, this requires the sustained effort of all of us at all levels of the government as well as of the private sector of our economy. I wish that the main contributor could have been a little more—I will not use the word beneficent—generous in the amount apportioned to the fund.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I think I should say a word or two mainly in response to the hon. member for Queens. In the first place, I am sure that he did not deliberately say there was a diminution because when you add \$50 million to \$100 million this is not my idea of a diminution. This sum will amount to a 50 per cent increase after three years. I will refrain from any comment about the amount of the increase over the fund at the time when this bill was originally introduced.

Mr. Flemming: There was no limit.

Mr. Pickersgill: There is no limit to zero, as the hon. gentleman so wisely said. However, I do not wish to get into any kind of controversy on this matter. We took the view that there should be a fund and that if it was wisely used we would come back to parliament and ask for a replenishment.

I think hon. members will agree I have taken a very keen interest in the work of the board and I am sure the hon. member for Kings will agree with me when I say that while he was a member of the board no project that was at any time put before the board was turned down because of lack of funds, although a lot of projects did not seem to the board to be wise or expedient for other reasons at the moment they were put before