

Atlantic Development Board Act

way it could prove of permanent advantage to the economic growth of what, up to now, has been referred to as a slow development area.

One of the most important things in the development of any slow development area is the attitude of the people in that area, and I feel that this bill, plus other action taken by the government, including incentives to industry, are a sign that the government is aware of the problems facing the Atlantic provinces. Our willingness to move in this direction will accomplish two things. The positive steps we take will in themselves have an effect, and secondly the doing of these things will create a favourable atmosphere among the people of the Atlantic provinces.

I think it is true to say that the people in this area have for long felt that, because they have not developed economically so rapidly as the rest of the country, the people in the rest of Canada regard them as permanent drags on the economy. Indeed the attitudes of governments in the past, both Liberal and Conservative, were not always what they ought to have been. We cannot have a continuous program of handouts, and any government expenditure in the area should be in the form of investment to expand the economy. This board is a step in the right direction; but in conclusion I suggest we should be prepared to realize that the functions of the board may change and may become larger than those we now envision.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I was privileged this afternoon to hear, for the first time, one of the members across the aisle speak on this Atlantic development board. I must congratulate him. It appears he spent some time putting his speech together and quite some time reading it, but he said that the previous government had done nothing for the Atlantic area. I take exception to that remark. The record of the previous government in the Atlantic area is one of which all members from that area can be proud. The hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Lloyd), who is the only hon. member for Halifax now in the chamber, was placed on record this afternoon as supporting this contention of mine.

What concerns me most is that the government was elected on the premise that unemployment was the greatest problem facing it, but since the budget was presented it has found bigger problems. This is something that concerns me, aside from the fact that there is one hon. member in the house from Halifax; and what concerns me further is that

[Mr. Cashin.]

the board comes under the jurisdiction and guidance of a minister representing Newfoundland.

I would prefer to see a local Atlantic province minister guiding this bill. For instance, the Minister of Labour, who comes from my own area, would be the most ideal and best suited minister to guide this legislation through the house. I say that, because he could in a way kill two birds with one stone. He could take care of a number of the unemployed in extending the membership of the board, and to this I have no objection despite the fact that some hon. members think I had something to say about it last year. Again I would remind them that I was absent from the house then at the request, as I said before, of my constituents. Anyway, I would prefer to see a native minister from the Atlantic provinces guiding this legislation.

One of my reasons for saying this is that the minister who represents Newfoundland indicated on one occasion that he even hates to campaign in that area. I am further concerned with the fact that the purse strings are controlled by a minister of finance who never in any way showed any concern for the people of the Atlantic area. This, Mr. Speaker, is down in writing, and to the extent that he was offered a ride on a rail out of my province. I am sure there are nine other provinces that would want to join with mine today.

There was a very worth-while point brought out earlier today when it was shown with regard to the guessing-with-Gordon budget—when the taxes were cut back to 4 per cent—that there is a possibility here for great profits to be made. I might say, on the other side of the question, that a great advantage is also given to big business, which can afford it, to stockpile and make further profits. It is getting to the point, with the type of budget that has been brought down—

Mr. Greene: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, are we discussing the Atlantic development board, or the budget?

Mr. MacInnis: In discussing the Atlantic development board we are discussing matters of finance, which are of great concern to the maritimes. I might point out that in addition to the possible profits which have been made, the type of financing arrangements with which we are faced today will provide big business with an opportunity to stockpile and make further profits when the taxes are increased at a later date. It is getting to the point where big business does not even have to speculate to make a profit.

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member to be allowed to discuss the budget in