

*Government Organization*

An hon. Member: It does.

● (3:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Mongrain:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I apologize for interrupting the Leader of the Opposition but I wish to remind him that the city of Three Rivers does not exist. Its correct name is Trois-Rivières.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize to my hon. friend. I shall be careful to call Trois-Rivières by its correct name in future. I thank my hon. friend for bringing this point to my attention. It seems that some of us do not yet understand some of the finer points connected with place names.

As I was trying to say, I hope the minister is fully aware of the implications of my remarks. I ask him to reconsider what he has in mind about the Atlantic Development Board. He ought to use it for the purposes I have suggested. Also he ought to consider consulting with the province of Quebec on the establishment of a similar agency to meet development problems east of Trois-Rivières dans cette province-là.

I suggest that changes in the Atlantic Development Board will weaken it and will involve loss of time and continuity in solving certain problems. Those changes will also bring about a degree of centralized bureaucracy and the minister will find effective co-ordination difficult to achieve under the new proposals.

I wish to ask another question about the general policy of the department in question. No doubt the minister is aware that the Economic Council of Canada, when discussing the problem of regional disparities, placed great emphasis on the development of growth related services in provinces which have not yet reached an adequate standard of growth. The Economic Council paid a great deal of attention to this matter in its report a couple of years ago. Although the bill empowers the government to make grants to provinces to help with the building of provincial infrastructures—I presume the grants will go toward certain kinds of development, road building, assistance to transportation, and so on—I wonder whether the bill envisages the kind of assistance the Economic Council of Canada regarded as essential if some regions of slow growth in the country are to move forward as rapidly as they ought to. I therefore ask the minister to consider seriously whether the bill fully incorporates the recommendations of the Economic Council in this regard.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Someone said it does. I do not know whether the minister said those words. I will not trespass much longer on the good nature of the house, but we must ask ourselves whether this government and the Liberal party are not swinging around like a windmill in certain areas of activity and responsibility. One year they set up a Department of Industry, which many said was not needed or necessary. Then, two or three years later they discovered their mistake and put the industry portfolio back under trade and commerce where it ought to have been all along. The government at one time appeared to be opposed to the establishment of so-called growth centres; now we wonder whether it may go to the other extreme. They took the Atlantic Development Board, which prior to 1963 had been set up as an advisory council, and made a great fuss about converting it into an effective administrative agency. Then in 1969 they decided after all that that step was an awful mistake and they reduced the status of that agency to that of an economic advisory council. From my reading of the bill that council will not meet very often.

From what I have seen, the government has really been going around in circles. The number of agencies potentially available for development purposes in the Atlantic provinces has been reduced. I know hon. members from the west as well as those from the east are concerned about what will happen to programs like ARDA and FRED. Others wonder whether there is truth in the rumours that P.F.R.A. is to be abolished. Hon. members on both sides of the house wish to be reassured on these points. Certainly it would be tragic if inadequacies under P.F.R.A. were to be the scapegoat for the inadequacies of other federal programs in western Canada. So I repeat to the government; Stop going around in circles. Do not swing too far in either direction in the concept of growth centres.

I assure the minister that he will run into political trouble over the growth centre concept; nevertheless, he will not find me giving him trouble unless he pushes the concept too far in either direction. Although I shall support him in that concept, I think he will find there will be no public acceptance of it by people across the country until it has been fully explained and sold to them. I ask him not to swing too far in either direction and to explain to the house exactly what he has in mind with regard to the definition of a region. Does he intend to consult the provinces on