

Government Organization

haps I might quote from the editorial in the *Chronicle Herald* for March 11.

Whatever the outcome, it is clear that Nova Scotia should be high on the new department's priority list. The disappearance of FRED before the nine-counties scheme got off the ground, and the fact that FRED plans are operating in other provinces, make such an emphasis appropriate.

Among other things which the minister will have under him is the Atlantic Provinces Power Development Act which was brought in during the time when we formed the government. It was very important in that it provided funds to build transmission lines in the Atlantic area in my constituency. Also, a large addition was made to the thermal plant at Trenton. I trust that this act will be continued. It has played an important role in helping the area. In Schedule B to Bill C-173, under Area Development Incentives Act, we find the following:

"designated area" means an area that was a designated area pursuant to the Department of Industry Act immediately prior to the repeal of that act—

I am glad to see that. The area which I represent is one of these designated areas. However, in common with the hon. member for Egmont, I wonder what will happen when the new act is implemented. We will want to know more about that. The minister now will say, "You have said a few things, what other concerns have you?" What I, and I believe members from all areas are concerned about, is that these various agencies which will be incorporated in this important department may be lost. We are afraid they may be lost in the bureaucracy in Ottawa and that the bureaucracy will run the show rather than the private citizens of the Atlantic area who could give the necessary instructions and do the necessary work in this regard.

I did hear the minister mention Professor Smith today. I think it was a good move to have him appointed the head of this council. But I am wondering who else will be appointed to the council and how much power they will have. I am afraid that the final solutions, submissions and recommendations of the Atlantic Development Council, which are so important to our area will be decided finally only by the bureaucracy—I do not say that unkindly—here in Ottawa. I hope that will not be the case.

There are a few questions I have for the minister which I believe are well phrased. I shall refer again to the *Chronicle-Herald* of January 25 of this year in which there are a few questions. They are as follows:

Given a reduced A.D.B., and a new department with responsibility for disadvantaged areas in all

parts of the country, how sensitive will federal responses be to Atlantic needs?

Will the new department judge Atlantic projects by the same standards as those applied in depressed areas elsewhere, and thus fall into the same trap which very early captured the Area Development Agency program—the industry location scheme which, in effect, discriminated against this region, and in favour of depressed areas of Quebec and Ontario?

Will it be as willing as the A.D.B. to discriminate in favour of the Atlantic Provinces, in those many cases in which the needs are different and greater, and against, say, northern Ontario? Will a program devised for, say, the Gaspé be applied to this region, whether appropriate or not?

Will Mr. Marchand, and Tom Kent, the new department's deputy minister, have the same personal commitment to Atlantic development as had the Hon. J. W. Pickersgill and Nova Scotia's Allan MacEachen, Mr. Marchand's predecessors in charge of the A.D.B., and Dr. E. P. Weeks, executive director of the board since its formation six years ago?

Perhaps more to the point will a Quebec-based minister and the civil servants assigned to the new department, few—

I hope this will not be the case.

—of whom will have—

This is what I mentioned about bureaucracy.

—any personal connection with the Atlantic region, be as sensitive to Atlantic opinion as the citizens of the four provinces who serve as A.D.B. directors?

Without the A.D.B. as a buffer, and with the new department thrust forward to deal with the provinces in regional development matters, is there not a danger that federal-provincial tensions in other fields (tax-sharing, shared-cost programs, and the like) will make their unwelcome presence felt more strongly in the war against economic disparity? Will the new department co-operate with the provinces—

The minister says it will.

—for example, as has the A.D.B., in the preparation of an overall development plan for the region?

I think this last part sums it up well.

In sum, will the new department be able to bring itself to the view, of which the A.D.B. is an expression, that the Atlantic region is a special area with special problems which require special solutions?

If it can, it will represent a great step forward. If it cannot, it will become the largest Ottawa target in Canadian history, for the accumulated economic frustrations of the Atlantic Provinces' 2,000,000 people.

With that, Mr. Chairman, may I call it six o'clock?

The Chairman: It being six o'clock, I now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.