

*Atlantic Development Board*

this house will be most pleased with this legislation. I am satisfied that he is. I am also very pleased with another aspect which this action indicates. It is the recognition of the general desirability of the Atlantic provinces of Canada working together. It has always been my opinion that the four provinces on the Atlantic seaboard can accomplish much for themselves by working together whenever possible.

I well recall the meeting of many interested citizens of the Atlantic provinces held in the city of Moncton in 1953, when the Atlantic provinces economic council was discussed and finally came into being. The late Angus L. Macdonald, then premier of Nova Scotia, was present at that meeting. Former premier Alex. Matheson of Prince Edward Island was there also. A representative of Premier Smallwood attended, and the New Brunswick government was present in a body. At long last a real co-operative effort was being made. The council has been very successful, and is an illustration how our four provinces can work together in an economic sense. Then we have the Atlantic premiers' conference which meets once a year, and at which all premiers and advisers meet together to discuss their various problems. This began in Fredericton in 1956 and has continued since. It likewise has served as a medium for the exchange in views and arriving at decisions for mutual co-operative action.

I would now remind the house of a question asked of the Prime Minister on April 18 last by my hon. friend from Cumberland. It was as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the recent article in the *Atlantic Advocate* referring to the possibility of a development fund for the Atlantic provinces and in view of the recommendation, among other things, of feasibility studies of public projects in the Atlantic provinces, does the Prime Minister have any comment to make?

And the Prime Minister's reply I shall also quote:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman gave me notice of his question. The government is now studying this matter and is giving consideration to the establishment of a federal Atlantic development board which would be empowered to examine projects recommended by provincial governments or other parties, and to give assistance and recommend appropriate plans to the government.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it is as a result of that assurance given by the Prime Minister to the house in April last that we have the paragraph dealing with this matter in the speech from the throne and the resolution which is presently before us.

I should like here to make a point of special significance which I wish to bring to the attention of this committee. The contemplated legislation is another illustration

of the attitude of this government which has held office since 1957. It recognizes these facts; that we have in the Atlantic provinces a special situation deserving special attention, deserving special consideration, and demanding special action. The vehicle for this special action is before us for attention this afternoon. The opportunity is offered to us all to heartily endorse the attempt to attack our disabilities and to secure the assistance of the central government in so doing. I would hope that we are all thankful for the chance to indicate our approval.

Since my hon. friend from Cumberland has referred to the *Atlantic Advocate*, presumably to the issue of March 1962, I have taken the trouble to look up that article on which his question appears to have been based. It is to be found on page 14 of the *Atlantic Advocate* for March 1962, under the heading "Plan of action". I should like, Mr. Chairman, to quote some of the statements contained in this article. First of all it quotes scripture as follows:

Unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Then it asks the question:

Does familiarity with it breed acceptance? Should the maritimes be content with this philosophy?

Then the article goes on to say:

A chain is as strong as its weakest link; and the economy of Canada is as strong as its weakest region.

So I submit that these assertions are definitely thought provoking. My opinion about them would be expressed in terms like these; that some parts of our great country may have national advantages of geography, of natural resources leading to industrial development, of somewhat less severe climate which might contribute to acceleration of population beyond the average. But the central government, with these situations in mind, should properly devote special attention to those areas which for some reason or other have lagged behind the rest of Canada. The Atlantic provinces are a region which comes under that general heading.

The contemplated action envisaged by the resolution which is presently before us is that we decide first of all:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to establish an Atlantic development board and to define the duties thereof—

It is the defining of the duties thereof that I should like to speak about at this moment, prior to which, however, I might just give a few of the reasons for the establishment of the board. There is a grave disparity between the average standards of the Atlantic region and those of the rest of Canada. This may be measured by average incomes, which are