

*National Economic Development Board*

softening economic conditions at that time. But these are the kind of informal conferences that can be very useful indeed, and they should be reinstated. Undoubtedly they would be sponsored by the kind of economic council that we in the Liberal party have in mind.

If the kind of national economic council the country needs is to be effective, it must be set up in such a way that it will command public respect. This means a full time chairman with a full time staff, and senior people separate from the Department of Finance or, for that matter, any other department. The council itself should consist of part time representatives of all important occupational groups in Canada, in order to provide not only advice to the full time staff but valuable links and contacts with labour, industry, farm groups and various public agencies. This practical, vigorous concept of economic policy-making is not apparent in the bill before us.

Mr. Speaker, I placed on record this afternoon some clear evidence that members of this government are suffering from a kind of schizophrenia when it comes to the question of economic philosophy and long term economic planning. I suggested that before the bill is passed the Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour—and I might add certain other ministers whose names I did not mention—should explain their recent conversion to at least some form of economic planning. I think it is particularly important, also, that we should have the views of the Minister without Portfolio, who is reputed to be the real father of this bill. I think he should be asked to submit himself to a paternity test in this matter. In order to accomplish this, Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Minister of Finance to refer this bill to the banking and commerce committee where it could be subjected to the kind of detailed examination and review that is desirable in the case of an important measure of this kind.

(Translation):

**Mr. Maurice Cote (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, the bill which is now before the house, entitled "An act to provide for the establishment of a national economic development board" apparently is aimed at imparting to the Canadian economy a direction to be chosen jointly by the various levels; this is good sociological thinking and is something more sensible than the planning philosophies we sometimes hear about, for the kind of planning that some political parties are putting forward would be nothing but a deterrent to free enterprise and the spirit of risk inherent to business.

[Mr. Gordon.]

However, as the member for Red Deer, head of the Canadian Social Credit party, said in this house two days ago:

Boards offer no cure-all answer.

Therefore, the government is mistaken in believing that it can get at the root of the ailment of Canadian economy even though, this act may eventually bring some measure of relief here and there. If we stop to think that nearly 15 per cent of the people in the country are in unthinkably difficult circumstances in spite of the wealth with which we have been so generously endowed by Providence, we will realize that a more dynamic policy is required at the federal level, in order to release commercial and industrial capital and fill the enormous needs of old or new businesses waiting for capital in order to carry out their development projects.

It is unthinkable that as regards the administration of the country, the two old line parties have not yet developed a financial policy in line with the problems of our times, the application of which would have provided Canada with an economic development rate comparable to our demographic expansion.

However, the national economic development board which is proposed deserves our fullest consideration, because everything which can help to increase the number of Canadian industries, owned by Canadians, will improve the lot of those who are unemployed in our country, if at the same time, steps are being taken to grant to consumers the purchasing power required to buy our national production.

The great aim which must be achieved is to take care, without delay, of the consumption of products. If it were not for our outmoded financial system, Canadian men, women and children would be able to consume a national production worth \$50 billion. Monetary expansion of debt money as it is practised today can only lead us to a bottomless abyss.

An economic development board, such as the one the government is advocating, shall have to try to put to use again all the industrial potential of the establishments which have closed their doors, for want of financial resources, after having been in business for a number of years. Let me give you an example of this situation. We had in Chicoutimi and in Val Jalbert, in the Saguenay area, pulp mills which for a long time had been the most important in the world. They had been built by one of the greatest industrial geni-