

[Texte]

a discussion and even those of us not from Newfoundland might have something to contribute of merit on the areas we saw. I was not at Stephenville; I do not know anything about it, but Fogo and Bell were such contrasting situations, both with difficulties but utterly different which I think need different solutions.

I also want to say that I concur heartedly with what Dr. O'Connell said concerning Devco. It was like stumbling into a kind of lost valley unexpectedly for me a least to rub shoulders with some of the people around there and see the merging potential that is coming along. Certainly there is lots of anxiety on the part of workmen and others about what the future holds but I was much encouraged by many of the things I saw there and thought again maybe to use a political term some more and better PR is needed. Certainly the direction things are going in is rather good.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, just two related points. One is that I am impressed more and more as we travel across the country with the myth that all Canadians hold that parliamentarians do not know anything about their problems. When I was on the Prairies last spring, as Mr. Cobbe will attest, all of the wheat farmers were quite convinced that we from Ontario knew nothing about their problems. I do not know what they think their M.P.'s do all the time. It was the same in Newfoundland and I even said this, not that I wanted to give credit to all those very vocal Tories but I said, what do you think your M.P.'s do? People would come up to me and say, "Now, you are from Ontario, did you know anything about this?" I said, yes. "Well, how did you know?" Because we hear about it, you know. It is the same all across the country. Parliament is not nearly as isolated as you think.

I do not want to treat the Press as the whipping boy but I do not know why this idea is created. Somehow there is an impression that nobody knows anything about any place except where they are from which is so much nonsense. If you are around here and half alive at all you become aware of the problems across the country. I found Newfoundland fascinating and it was good to be there but certainly it was not just something that I never expected to find, because we had heard it discussed so often before, and the same with Devco.

The other point that bears on this is that everybody in every part of Canada is convinced that they are the forgotten region. We have about 983 forgotten regions in Canada and this is just so much nonsense. My riding

[Interprétation]

tre nous qui ne sont pas de Terre-Neuve ont certainement leur contribution à apporter. Quant aux régions que nous avons vues, je ne suis pas allé à Stephenville. Je n'ai vu que Fogo et Bell dont les difficultés, entièrement différentes nécessitent des solutions différentes.

Je souscris entièrement à ce que le docteur O'Connell a dit de DERCO. C'est comme si je m'étais soudain trouvé dans la vallée de la désolation, mais par les contacts que j'ai eus, je me suis rendu compte du potentiel qu'on va pouvoir y exploiter. Les travailleurs et les autres aussi craignent pour l'avenir. La situation prend pourtant une bonne tournure. Il faudrait commencer par améliorer les relations publiques.

Au cours de notre périple, j'ai été frappé de constater cette idée communément répandue chez les Canadiens, à savoir que les députés ne connaissent rien à leurs problèmes. Au printemps dernier, par exemple, et M. Cobbe pourrait le confirmer, les cultivateurs de blé étaient persuadés que nous qui étions de l'Ontario, ne connaissions rien à leurs problèmes. Ils doivent se demander ce que leurs députés font à longueur de journée. J'ai constaté la même chose à Terre-Neuve où j'ai demandé: «A votre avis, que font les députés? et on me répondait: «Vous qui êtes d'Ontario, vous ignorez comment c'est ici?» Et je leur rétorquais que le Parlement ne vit pas dans l'isolement et que la situation est partout identique.

Sans vouloir jeter la pierre à la presse, je crois qu'elle est responsable de cette opinion générale d'après laquelle, seuls les gens qui sont sur place savent ce qui se passe. J'ai été fasciné par Terre-Neuve et pourtant rien ne m'a surpris puisque nous en avions tellement parlé de même que de...

Chaque région du Canada estime qu'elle est oubliée. Dans ce cas, il y a 983 provinces déshéritées. Ma circonscription qui n'est qu'à 100 milles d'ici estime qu'elle est si proche qu'on l'oublie. Vous voyez.