

*Atlantic Development Board Act*

the federal treasury. In New Brunswick the average per capita tax paid to the federal treasury is \$55, in Newfoundland it is \$45, in Nova Scotia it is \$62 and in Prince Edward Island it is only 36. That will give the committee an idea of how badly we need something down there to boost our economy so our people can earn enough money to make their contribution to the government of Canada. But until that period is reached there has to be a gap filler. There is a gap between what we in the Atlantic area earn and what is earned by people in the other provinces of Canada, and that gap must be closed. I suggest that one of the vehicles designed to close it and, if it is given the chance, one of the vehicles that will close it, is the Atlantic Development Board.

The minister mentioned the fact that the board is set up without relation to political affiliation. I can substantiate this, Mr. Chairman. The board is comprised at the present time of good, solid-thinking, hard-headed businessmen who know the problems of the Atlantic area and are doing their best to solve them without receiving any remuneration at all. This is probably one of the few boards operated by the federal government whose members do not receive some daily remuneration for the time they sit.

The members of this board get nothing. They get their travelling expenses, but my experience with the board is that the red pencil is used very generously when it comes to allowing even these travelling expenses. However, this is not the important consideration. The important consideration is that the board is composed of men who know the problems of the Atlantic area and have the interests of the area at heart. Mr. MacKeigan has proved himself to be a very efficient chairman. The staff of the board, headed by Dr. Weeks, is very competent and is doing an extremely good job.

But I would point out, and I am not doing this in a critical way, that in spite of their efforts there has unfortunately been little improvement. Perhaps we have not yet had time to see the improvement. But if we examine the record I think we will see that, despite the good intentions of the government in setting up the board and giving it 100 million to work with, despite the good intentions of the members of the board and the staff, there has as yet been little improvement in so far as the economy of the Atlantic area is concerned. Although the spirit is willing, the results so far have been weak. I hope our

[Mr. McQuaid.]

development will speed up, because if the speed of Atlantic development continues at its present rate I am afraid that success will be deferred until the days of our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

I am not satisfied that \$50 million is enough at the present time to put into the fund. In April, 1963, \$100 million was put into the fund. It is now almost three years later and the minister tells us that the fund is just about exhausted. I suggest that that statement could be verified, because I believe that in April, 1965, 14 months ago, \$90 million of the \$100 million had been committed. If that is correct, and I believe it is, the board has been working with only \$10 million for the last 14 months.

When the fund was set up by the present government it was mentioned consistently on that side of the house that \$1 billion over a ten-year period was no more than sufficient to be poured into the Atlantic area to assist its economy. If \$1 billion over a ten-year period was necessary, which is \$100 million a year, I suggest that the minister should give consideration now to increasing to \$100 million the \$50 million for which he is asking in this resolution, because I am sure the board will make the very best use of the \$100 million.

Of course, and rightly so, expenditures are controlled by Treasury Board. The Atlantic Development Board may recommend the expenditure of \$1 million or \$2 million for a certain project but—and I repeat, rightly so—that expenditure has to be approved by Treasury Board. If we put another \$100 million in the fund now I think it would give the members of the board more incentive to go ahead and plan immediately, as they obviously must do if we are to fill the gap that exists between the economic standards of the Atlantic area and those of the rest of Canada. I make these suggestions in all earnestness, Mr. Chairman, and again would assure the committee that in my opinion at least this board is doing a very excellent job for the Atlantic area. We in the Atlantic region are extremely grateful to the government which set up this board in the first instance and to the government which is now encouraging and promoting it.

**Mr. Macquarrie:** Mr. Chairman, when a measure like this was before a previous parliament I spoke on all phases of the measure including third reading. This time I will be much less loquacious. I merely want to say—I am glad my colleague from Kings said it in his excellent speech—that while I join with