

development, in the shorter term, than others. I would expect the minister to take the same attitude.

The growth centre concept is not the sacred cow it was some years ago, but it still makes sense to follow up your best possibilities. It also makes sense to recognize that some concentration of skills and services within a section or a region is an advantage in terms of regional development. The recent study of the Economic Council of Canada entitled "Living Together", to which the minister has referred, links urban living, within limits, to economic growth and progress. I am not suggesting the encouragement of disparity within regions unnecessarily or as a goal; I simply suggest that it is perhaps the inevitable result for the time being of pursuing the best chances first. The department and the government must simply be prepared to accept the flack from people, including members of parliament, who are unhappy about certain sections of a region moving ahead more rapidly than others.

Because there have been some failures with regard to large enterprises, some people suggest we should go entirely for smaller enterprises and concentrate upon community development, rural development and the development of villages and small towns. Certainly, there is nothing finer than the development of small communities, and I am in favour of this. It strengthens the lives of people in these communities and it should not be neglected. On the other hand, we ought not to neglect large-scale development.

The report of the Economic Council of Canada to which the minister referred examined the connection and found some association between the level of technological development of a region and the rate of economic growth in that region. This is an age of technology, and generally an area needs high technology as well as natural resources if it is to prosper. There have been failures in developing high technology industries in the maritimes, and probably everybody involved has made mistakes from time to time. But there have also been—and I will associate the minister with this if he wishes—some striking successes during the years. My point is that we should learn from our mistakes and not abandon the effort to promote and develop large-scale enterprises regions such as the Atlantic provinces.

I should like to say, also, that in terms of evaluating the effort to fight regional disparity, in terms of judging the success of provincial and federal governments in the Atlantic provinces since the mid-1950s, we have to remember that the traditional economy of provinces such as Nova Scotia went through a revolution during the 1950s and 1960s—and perhaps it is continuing—where thousands and thousands of traditional ways of making a living simply disappeared. A province like Nova Scotia has had to run hard to even stand still in order to make up for the traditional employment that was disappearing in the restructuring of traditional industries which involved a substantial drop in employment and personal incomes.

While it is easy to be discouraged, particularly when there are forms of discouragement around such as high power rates and continued erosion of traditional industries in the Atlantic

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region and the province of Quebec, it is important to recognize that despite failures and disappointments new developments have taken place. People in other parts of Canada should recognize this and not regard it all as an idle effort.

I should like to say that successive federal governments have been helpful to the Atlantic provinces. We just have to consider the program of equalization by itself, for example, and what this has meant to the level of governmental services to those provinces. When I think of what could have been done and what could be done by the development of a coherent plan, I become very disappointed about the development of such a plan under the leadership of this government.

It would not be fair to say that the government of Canada established the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and then said "Get on with the job and we will forget the whole thing." It would be fair to say, however, that when the government has been challenged about its efforts in the field of regional economic disparity, it has tended to point to the existence of DREE and say, "Look at all we have done by establishing this department." Despite the minister's remarks this afternoon, it is fair to say that DREE has not developed a planned attack to encourage growth in the Atlantic area or in any region. It is fair to say, too, that the government has not developed co-ordination of its own activities. The minister said recently in committee that DREE cannot do it all by itself: He said that co-operation and co-ordination with other departments was improving, but he was not pretending it was perfect. He said it was not perfect that morning, when he spoke from his heart, but today in the House, when he spoke from a prepared speech, his story was different; he put some emphasis on the degree of co-ordination which exists.

● (1710)

Mr. Lessard: I am still not totally happy. I suppose I never will be.

Mr. Stanfield: Of course the minister is not happy, and except for the minister no one who has been involved with the workings of the department would pretend for a moment that the degree of co-ordination between DREE and other departments of government is anywhere close to satisfactory. We have seen several examples of departments of government working at cross-purposes with DREE.

Mr. Paproski: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I regret that I must be so critical about the lack of co-ordination. I am also critical of DREE for operating largely on a provincial basis within the maritime provinces. This is something the minister just boasted about. It is fine and necessary to respect the existence of provinces. But I say to the minister through you, sir, that if one is to develop an effective attack on regional economic expansion in the maritime provinces, one cannot be satisfied just to deal with the provinces. There has to be a higher degree of integration than that.