

Government Organization

for we realize that someone is willing to look after those serious problems. Besides, that was the general theme of the whole campaign of the right hon. Prime Minister, and his only election promise, to try to establish a just society. But we must have it, that is a sure thing.

● (5:40 p.m.)

[*English*]

The Chairman: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired unless it is the disposition of the committee that he continue.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gendron: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On concluding my remarks, I say that we would be happy to be given a generous thought by the higher authorities. It would be in their interest to do so, because otherwise it would be just as costly, considering the fact that the ten counties I was referring to are granted \$150 million yearly in subsidies and assistance of some kind or another.

I wonder whether it would not be preferable to ask the people for their participation and their investments for the creation of employment, to restore confidence and to revalorize environments instead of getting everybody into the habit of relying on welfare benefits which only result in depriving them of their self-respect.

I think that those living in underdeveloped areas, where they were the first owners, are capable of showing a great deal of generosity, of broadmindedness, of energy and to acknowledge the need for modern solutions to new problems, the need to regroup themselves, to communicate, to try to acknowledge and understand the proposed solutions and to decide through a vote.

It is also necessary to understand that, if economic balance is to be re-established in the country, we must reunite our energies, our enterprises, our community services and our municipalities. We must create some unity and sufficient powers to counterbalance any undue centralization of which we are the first victims and which is depriving our environment of its most capable human resources.

Intellectual knowledge combined to experience through love of our country as a catalyst and this natural pride in our environment will create such a strength that an irresistible trend of progress will definitely be launched in our regions.

[*Mr. Gendron.*]

[*English*]

Mr. MacEwan: Mr. Chairman, the bill before us is one for which we have awaited for several months, and which has been given prominence by the government. Indeed, I go back to the time of the last election when at one point during the campaign the Prime Minister asserted, and I trust he still believes this, that the question of regional development, particularly Atlantic development, was as important to Canadian unity as the constitutional linguistic issue. I certainly agree with that statement.

I note that the minister was in the Atlantic provinces at the APEC meeting last October, at which time he suggested that the regional development department was a reflection of the high priority assigned by the government to this question. We accept this statement, but we on this side have certain reservations regarding this department, and I want to go into them very briefly. I do not know if I will finish before six o'clock, Mr. Chairman, but there are matters I wish to put to the minister. I hope he will reply to them before this debate concludes.

● (5:50 p.m.)

The first of these is the matter of the Atlantic Development Board, something which was referred to by my leader and also by the hon. member for Egmont. It is being replaced by the Atlantic Development Council and we will want to know more about that. Another matter which I have pursued with the minister for some time, and with his predecessor, is the ARDA report on the nine eastern counties of Nova Scotia. I do not know where it stands now. Yesterday, the minister stated that he had received a letter from the minister of agriculture of the province of Nova Scotia. He also stated that if the minister wants the report made public he will reconsider the matter at that time. I mention this now because the ARDA report took several years to prepare under the combined resources of two governments. I am afraid, and this fear is echoed in the *Chronicle-Herald* of Halifax for March 11, that the report may be buried that the two governments may decide not to make it public. I hope this report, which I understand covers many facets of the economy of the nine counties which I represent, will be considered by the government. The government announced that the last FRED program, which was in respect of Prince Edward Island, would be the final one. There was one in New Brunswick. Per-