

*Canadian Economy*

The government should encourage development of those tidal power generation sites in the Bay of Fundy which show a beneficial energy supply to Canadian energy requirements. Since 1969, lack of foresight and the complete absence of government policy have seen Fundy tidal power studies move forward at a snail's pace. Even considering this continent's energy needs in the 1990's and projecting the dwindling supplies and increasing prices of fossil fuels, Fundy looms as an attractive opportunity with tremendous socio-economic benefits for all of eastern Canada.

And what about Fundy? Can a huge source of renewable energy attract chemical and metal based industries to locate near the power source? Is there a good labour source, good transportation facilities, a sea port, and other infrastructures? In such heavy industries there is a considerable lead time from the inception of planning to the commencement of construction. The omission of DREE from involvement in the Fundy studies is regrettable and is another example of the failure of government to focus the efforts of all departments on the problem of regional disparity. The involvement of DREE now to maximize the employment potential of a possible and, I hope, impending Fundy development is imperative.

Canada needs national economic development policies and regional development policies related to the national purpose.

In eastern Canada we have a tremendous potential, but we need national leadership to realize it. With Saint John and Halifax—two deepwater year round ports—we can sell a transportation facility to the whole Atlantic seaboard, which, for the most part, lacks deepwater ports. With relaxed tariff and quota regulations and active federal support, these ports can be gateways of commerce and, if connected to a modern transportation system in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, they can enable other communities to become staging areas for growth centre developments.

The federal government should not simply content itself with giving a department such as DREE a limited degree of authority. It should establish machinery which would produce co-ordinated results and which would, in terms of regional economic development, co-ordinate the policies of all departments, particularly transport, finance, and trade with the policies being followed by DREE.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of co-ordinating efforts within departments of the federal government. It is also necessary to co-ordinate the efforts of the federal and provincial governments, especially in the Atlantic region. The three Maritime provinces have improved their machinery for inter-provincial co-operation. But we are still a long way from a plan of development for the region in which each provincial government and the federal government would play a co-ordinated role.

DREE should get away from the idea that its only responsibility is to promote a series of ad hoc development agreements and provide industrial incentives to entrepreneurs who wish to move into the Atlantic area, or to local businessmen who want to expand their present operations. DREE should be doing far more than that. It should be looking hard at the big jobs

crying to be tackled. For example, what has DREE done about the Fundy tidal power project which is linked with the building of the Chignecto Canal? I would wager, nothing. It has been very convenient for the government, whenever Fundy was seriously mentioned, to be able to pass it off to a study, or a commission, or a committee which it knows full well can stall the project another year or another decade. Why is DREE not brought into these discussions? Why is DREE not handed the responsibility of correlating these studies? Why is DREE not given the job to do?

DREE was created to lead the attack on regional disparity. Like Uriah the Hittite, it was to be thrust into the forefront of battle, there to do or die. But DREE stayed in the background when the big conflicts raged. It handed out its grants and loans to justify its existence and failed miserably to take hold of the big projects which the Atlantic provinces have needed for generations. In short, it avoided the massive development undertakings without which the Atlantic provinces will always remain what they are today—the most neglected part of Canada.

Infrastructures are the only hope of getting Atlantic Canada into a position of parity with the rest of the country, a position from which it can stay caught up. Millions of dollars in piecemeal grants over the years have done nothing but keep us from sliding farther behind. The dole has failed. Now it is time to get back to the bold and imaginative policy of regionalism pioneered by the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), the principle of special aid to the Atlantic provinces on a massive scale. Where mere millions have been parcelled out to keep the wolf from the door, billions are needed, not in spending but investment in permanent and lasting projects which will bring the Atlantic provinces to equal partner status with the other six, and which will dispose of the need, once and for all, of the subsidies and handouts which have always been associated with us as a backward area.

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DREE was launched with great fanfare as the answer to all our economic problems. It did not take very long, however, for the Atlantic provinces to realize exactly what DREE was: just another federal agency handing out grants, loans and doles, and shirking its responsibility for getting to the fundamental problems of the area and for spearheading the mighty projects which common sense tells us must be the cornerstones of Atlantic prosperity.

These projects are the Fundy Tidal project, development of the ports of Saint John and Halifax, and an Atlantic transportation policy which would include a corridor road with United States co-operation and a modern highway and rail system to transport agricultural products, parts for manufacturing industries, and other goods to world markets via the ports of Saint John and Halifax.

I believe that new policies should show a willingness to get to the basics of Atlantic economics and to put first things first. There has to be a new set of priorities, and the projects I have mentioned have to be in the top echelons of those priorities.