

National Economic Development Board

merely to patch up a little bit of the manifest inefficiency of which they have been guilty for the last five or more years.

The mix-up is much worse than that painted by the words I have just spoken. I ask hon. members to recall that the board we are now discussing, the national economic development board, is to be under the direction of the Minister of Finance. The Atlantic development board is to be under the direction of another minister not yet named, but most likely the Minister of National Revenue. The advisory council on industrial change and manpower adjustment is under the Minister of Labour and the national productivity council is under the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Each of these bodies has jobs that mesh together with the tasks of every other one. But each one of these four bodies is under the direction of a different minister, and is composed of different people, every one of whom is to do the work in his spare minutes away from a busy executive life in industry, labour or agriculture.

You have only to read the bills and acts to see the extent to which the jobs of these various bodies are almost exactly the same. The advisory council on industrial change and manpower adjustment has to be concerned with productivity, the same as the national productivity council; and the national economic development board will be talking nonsense unless it is concerned with the capital expenditures and the plans for economic development on the Atlantic seaboard. Yet, I repeat, every one of these boards is under a different minister, with different personnel, and all of them doing precisely the same job.

I submit it is an insult to the intelligence of the Canadian people, let alone the members of this parliament, to suggest they will be fooled by this kind of approach and that this is a serious way of tackling economic planning for Canada.

As I have said, everybody has been talking about planning and everybody is pointing his finger at the planning done in France. The Liberals even say it is their policy. But what is the planning program in France? It is about time this important subject be looked at with some knowledge as well as understanding of what is meant by the agencies that are required for the purpose.

What do the French do in the realm of planning? First, they have a commissariat général du plan, a general commissariat of planning, which has under it agencies such as the national productivity council, the regional Atlantic development board and the industrial change and manpower adjustment

council, all of the agencies related to the total plan under the general commissariat.

The general commissariat has the duty of drawing up a plan, not merely of consulting, not merely of producing information, not merely of making surveys, but of drawing up a concrete plan for economic action in France and as they go along, according to the speeches and reports of M. Masse, who is the actual commissioner of planning in France, they consult the various councils and bodies that are related to the commissariat général du plan. They consult what they call the modernization commissions in order to see how each of the industries would fit in and what technological and automation changes must be made. They make that inquiry not only in general terms but in relation to the specific industries and the regional plans that may be needed. In other words, you have a central planning agency with power to consult other government agencies, with power to relate the work, to integrate the ideas and then come to the cabinet of France with an actual concrete plan of economic development and economic action.

Mr. Martineau: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question? Will he tell the house whether this body has power of coercion over these various other bodies?

Mr. Lewis: No planning board that has ever been suggested in a democratic country has any power of coercion, and may I say, in all kindness to the minister, that the question shows his ignorance of the very subject which he introduced. In no western country has any one suggested that a board which is to propose plans to a government is itself to have any coercive powers. But the planning commission in France does have the—

Mr. Martineau: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member misunderstood my question. I did not imply that there was coercion, but I wanted the hon. member's opinion on that matter.

Mr. Lewis: I thank the minister for his interest in my opinion. It is that no board which is to present plans to a cabinet can or should have coercive power. Indeed, it has never been suggested by my party, or the C.C.F. which preceded it, that any planning board would have the authority to implement its plans. The implementation of the plans is the job of government, subject to the authority of parliament. No one in our party has ever suggested anything else. So I say, Mr. Speaker, that the question shows an ignorance of the matter. But what you must have is genuine planning, and not playing at checkers, moving little pieces on a checkerboard. The body given the authority to plan must have

[Mr. Lewis.]