

Supply

sort of regional banking system. I do not know what he meant by that. I did not think that the New Democrats liked banks. I will listen to him speak later.

We have the former member for St. Maurice who is now the front runner in the Liberal leadership race talking about going back to the future. He wants to bring DRIE back. When I heard this I went back and looked at an interview he did on *The Journal* with Barbara Frum in 1984. I remembered his rather peculiar ideas on finance and economic development. I am going to read this into the record. I invite members to look it up, as Casey Stengel would say. He was asked: "What about the deficit?" And this was his answer: "If you don't have a deficit to recycle savings, what happens to the money? The money is flowing out of the country. I just want to tell you that the deficit is a very complex instrument in economic development".

• (1240)

This is a gentleman who links economic development to deficits and says that if you do not have a deficit you have no place to put your money, no place to save. This is on the record.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacKay: I invite members opposite to look it up and study it.

I wish to give another example of the somewhat negative response that we have been getting on this side of the House when we are trying to do something for a sector of the economy in Atlantic Canada which is having difficulty. I refer to the fishing sector.

We brought forward \$130 million as an interim measure, which we announced in December, to deal with this very serious situation. What we got was a diatribe of condemnation from a party which, from 1980 to 1984, only spent an average of \$185 million in total for economic development through DRIE. Yet it pours scorn on \$130 million as an interim measure for one sector.

There is an awful lot of insincerity and a lot of rhetoric instead of some constructive suggestions and some thoughtful moves that perhaps could be put forward by

our colleagues opposite which I certainly would appreciate and listen to and, if appropriate, act upon.

When the Prime Minister correctly noted that the economy of Atlantic Canada was performing better than expected, and that the over-all economy had improved considerably—and this is an undeniable fact—despite the serious problems in the fishery sector, again the Liberals ridiculed this particular statement. This type of reaction only contributes to the perpetuation of the negative image about the economy of our region. It really does not deserve this; it deserves better. Statements like this one have the potential to impact negatively on investors who are about to expand their present enterprises or come there with new initiatives to start. I would urge members opposite not to be so vitriolic in condemning the efforts of this government to help their particular regions through these regional agencies. It does not do anyone any good. It impacts on the public image of the region, and it is counterproductive.

Thankfully investors have not been listening to this kind of diatribe and this kind of negative publicity. As a matter of fact my colleague opposite, the member for Kenora—Rainy River, spoke about national unity. It was interesting to me to see a Gallup poll featured—and I think my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso may have seen it—in the *Halifax Herald*. It was a front page story last week stating that the Gallup poll taken in Atlantic Canada sampling Atlantic Canadian's feelings about the economy, the future and so on was the most positive in any area of Canada, which left the pundits rather puzzled.

Mr. Arseneault: Because there are more Liberals in Atlantic Canada.

Mr. MacKay: If there are more Liberals in Atlantic Canada, perhaps they have greater reason to be thankful for what this government has done and they feel better as a result of the new policies that are being brought in. That probably does account for it. Now I have the answer, and I am very grateful for that.

Mr. Arseneault: There is hope for the future. They know we are going to form the government.

Mr. MacKay: They are going to form the government some time after the year 2000, perhaps.