

Government Organization Act, 1983

trade side and the political side are fighting over everything, even as to where the coolers should go, who is closest to the cooler and who is farthest away from the cooler. That is the struggle that is going on in External Affairs now under this new arrangement that creates three Ministers where one Minister existed before.

I am against that, Mr. Speaker. I am opposed to these changes in the Department of External Affairs. I wish I were the critic for that Department. I would attack the move with vim and vigour, I can assure you, and my successor, old slasher, will, I am sure, carry on the vigorous strain of criticism.

An Hon. Member: He wrote a letter and he has reformed. He is not the slasher any more.

Mr. Crosbie: Well, if the slasher is reforming, then verily there is no hope for Canada.

Let me move on, Mr. Speaker, to an even more serious aspect of this legislation which has just been touched upon by the Hon. Member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon), a very distinguished Member who is moving up in the shadow Cabinet. He is rushing up through the ranks of the shadow Cabinet. His presence is looming longer in the shadows. What I refer to now, Mr. Speaker, is that this Bill of course takes the old DREE Department, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and establishes a new Department, DRIE, the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion. The only thing the Government has done in three and a half years is to change an "e" to an "i". The Department of DREE becomes the Department of DRIE.

When it comes to spending money and helping the less advantaged regions of Canada, the Government has done less than nothing. I am glad to see that the Hon. Member for Humber-Port-au-Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) and the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) are listening to me. Both of them are now in competition for the elevation to the post of representative in the Cabinet from Newfoundland. These two fine young gentlemen are in a battle now to see which one of them will be elevated. Of course, there is now a third contender, and he has had considerable experience in matters that the ten-day wonder has had experience in, so perhaps he will beat them out and get there ahead of them. We are all watching with bated breath.

There is today one of the Canadian Provinces that has no representative in the Government of Canada. Perhaps it is better for us to have no representative than to have what we have had because for the last three and a half years we have had a representative of the Government of Canada unable to protect our Province.

Here is what has happened to the Province of Newfoundland because the Prime Minister does not like Provinces that are independent or that have views that differ from his own. Under DREE in 1979-80, the Government spent \$76 million, all of it badly needed, by the way. The next year, 1980-81, it dropped the spending in Newfoundland to \$46.5 million despite the inflation that had raged since, the Liberal inflation

that cut the value of money by a quarter in that period. Then in 1981-82, it cut the spending in Newfoundland and Labrador under DREE to \$36.8 million. I heard the absurd Minister of MSERD (Mr. Johnston) say today what great things they were doing with their special program for special projects, a Liberal slush fund for Liberal districts that they still have. This is the spending that they have been cutting, and they have cut it down to \$34.9 million in 1982-83, and less than \$34 million is to be spent in Newfoundland in 1983-84 under the programs carried on by DREE. That is the progress, Mr. Speaker. The people of Newfoundland are not interested in legislation that establishes DRIE when the spending under those programs in Newfoundland has been cut in half in the last four years. Has Newfoundland become less regionally deprived or disadvantaged in the last four years? Not at all, Mr. Speaker. There are 43,000 unemployed there, as I told the Prime Minister in Question Period today. He would not know that, nor would he care. He does not know what happens in Prince Edward Island or in Newfoundland. He is more familiar with the Greek islands, with Lesbos and Crete, than he is with the island of Newfoundland or the island of Prince Edward Island or Anticosti or Vancouver Island. These are not the islands he is interested in. He does not know that we have 43,000 unemployed.

● (1740)

We do not have a Minister in the Government any longer. Perhaps the Prime Minister is going to shove a Senator into the vacuum that now exists. It will be the first time that a vacuum ever filled a vacuum if he takes one of the Newfoundland Senators and shoves him or her into the Cabinet to represent Newfoundland.

These are the realities, Mr. Speaker—spending cutbacks—in 1979-80 \$76 million was spent in Newfoundland, but this year it will be less than \$34 million. The Government and the Ministers will go down there and make the announcements unilaterally.

The Minister in this new Department, the Minister for Cornwall—I am not allowed to use his name in the House—is a fine chap. I do not understand why he will proceed in the same direction as his predecessors.

There used to be a General Development Agreement under which the Province and the federal Government, together, undertook certain programs which were usually financed 90-10 or sometimes 75-25. One of those programs was to assist rural development associations of which there are 51 in the Province of Newfoundland. Each received \$16,500 per year under the joint agreement while the rural development council received about \$70,000. The funding was 90 per cent federal and 10 per cent provincial. That agreement expired at the end of last March and it has not been renewed. It was extended to September 30, but now there has been an announcement that the federal Government is going to move unilaterally. It is going to provide 100 per cent of some funding for the rural development associations themselves under certain programs