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Scotia to see which of these agreements it would like to have renewed.”

Can you believe, Mr. Speaker, that people concerned about fisheries, about forestry, about tourism have not had any ideas since March 31, 1989? Can you believe, Mr. Speaker, that the people concerned about economic development, people concerned about DEVCO, people concerned about all these things that are important to Atlantic Canada have just sat still, have never talked to their Premiers, have never talked to the federal cabinet Ministers or federal departmental officials? Obviously that is not true.

Obviously the common denominator is that the federal Government has not got its act together on regional development and is unwilling to make the commitments that are necessary. In an interview immediately after the November 1988 election, Mickey Cohen, a former Deputy Minister of Finance who has been both a defender and proponent of the federal government philosophy, indicated one of the directions that the Government should take in light of the Free Trade Agreement. He stated: “I guess I would go after regional development and universality. I would cut out most of the industrial programs, particularly the ones geared to the regions. If you want to cut spending, you have got to cut programs. You have got to say to Atlantic Canada: you are on your own”.

• (1220)

As I said, Mickey Cohen is a former Deputy Minister of Finance and has defended and proposed many of the government programs. I believe that his advice given after the November 1988 election is the advice that the Government is following. It will not admit that, because it would be politically devastating, but it is obviously the direction the Government is taking.

The Minister spoke about the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and said that it was important, that it was being used, that it was something the region really needed, and that the decisions were finally made in Atlantic Canada. Only two weeks ago he announced that the program funding was going to be cut for this agency. According to the Minister, it was important, it is being used, and the decisions are being made in the region. He went on to say that all the small businesses understood the importance of the program and were aware that the

program was available. Available? Yes. But, funds? No. Again, Atlantic Canada is being hurt.

The direction of the Government is obvious. It is not only happening here one day and over there some other day. When we saw the well leaked Budget of the Minister of Finance we saw that this year there would be \$1.4 billion for regional development but that next year there would only be \$1 billion for regional development in this country. There is \$1.4 billion one year and \$1 billion the next year, and in subsequent years there is an indication that there might be further cut-backs.

We know that regional development has been a prime target of the Americans since the Free Trade Agreement was signed. We know that the Americans got most of what they wanted at the negotiating table, but one area in which they have not had complete success is regional development. By the actions of the Government, whether it is cutting the regional development program by \$.4 billion each year, whether it is cutting the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency each year, or whether it is cutting back on the Economic Regional Development Agreements that existed between the federal Government and the provinces, it is fulfilling the American mandate. The Government is not fulfilling a Canadian mandate. It is not fulfilling the requirements of the Canadian Constitution with regard to regional development, but it is meeting the goals of the American negotiators. That is exactly what the Government is doing.

It is a sham for the Minister to pretend that he has to find out what the Nova Scotia Government wants with regard to Economic and Regional Development Agreements. That shows exactly what the federal Government is attempting to do. It is attempting to get out of a significant role for regional development. It will devastate the country and guarantee that the inequities that exist at the present time will only become worse with the passage of time. That is the goal of the Government, because it wants to make sure that the American negotiating position is the ultimate winner in the battle for control of this continent.

I would like to address that issue longer, however, there are many other things that are hurting Atlantic Canada. I am only allowed 20 minutes to cover all those issues, so I will move on to an issue that I believe is