

*Atlantic Development Board*

**Mr. Robichaud:** Name him.

**The Chairman:** Order. There was no point of order, as is apparent to the hon. member who raised it. The parliamentary secretary has the floor, and I would ask hon. members to co-operate, because I cannot hear.

**Mr. McGrath:** Obviously, Mr. Chairman,—

**Mr. Robichaud:** Give us the name of the person who wrote that.

**Mr. McGrath:**—hon. gentlemen opposite are just not prepared to listen to the facts. They did nothing for so long, that when something tangible is done, all they can do is laugh and ridicule. I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, that this resolution is the most important measure ever to be introduced in this house with respect to the Atlantic provinces, and it is just the culmination of the efforts of this government over the years to do for the Atlantic provinces what the Liberals failed to do during the 22 years of neglect when they were in office.

**Mr. Douglas:** Mr. Chairman, I had not intended taking any part in the discussion of this resolution, but after listening to some of the government supporters speaking on it I thought I had better find out if they were talking about the same resolution that was being discussed by this committee. I listened to their eloquent exaggerations as to what this resolution will do, statements that this is the greatest piece of legislation ever passed in the interests of the maritimes, the statement that this is going to make the maritimers masters of their own destiny, and so on, and thought it might be a good thing if we just came back to the actual facts of this resolution before the debate is wound up.

Let me say, in the first place, that I think hon. members from all other parts of Canada will welcome the idea of having an Atlantic development board. I would like to compliment the minister who introduced the resolution. I know all hon. members of the house would want to say to him that neither he, the government nor anyone else need ever apologize for bringing in special legislation for this area of Canada. Because I think we agree with him when he says that this area deserves special consideration and demands special action. This is the case because the Atlantic provinces have had for many years a lower per capita income than the rest of Canada, a higher rate of unemployment than any other part of Canada—certainly higher than the national average—and they have had particular problems which have brought with them difficulties both social and economic.

I have been rather amused all day listening to the Liberal and Conservative members

[Mr. Clancy.]

each trying to lay the blame on the other party for the conditions in the Atlantic provinces. I certainly do not intend to get into this game of trying to prove that it is the Conservatives' fault or the Liberals' fault that conditions are as they are in the Atlantic provinces. All I want to say is that the conditions are there, that they are appalling, that both the old line parties which have governed Canada since 1867 must accept responsibility for this state of affairs, that there is not much use spending time in attaching blame; the problem now is to get on with the job of trying to improve the situation. It has been more than a matter of a lack of government policy.

We have had in Canada since 1867 national policies which have deliberately developed a great industrial heartland in central Canada. That policy, by means of transportation, tariffs and investment, has used western Canada and the Atlantic provinces to supply raw materials and fuel, and on the other hand has made them the market place for the products of central Canada. There is a price you have to pay for such a policy, and certainly the Atlantic provinces, and at certain times western Canada, have paid the price. Therefore, no one need apologize for saying that in those circumstances in addition to a national economic development board we need an Atlantic development board to pay particular attention to the problems of the Atlantic provinces.

I rose simply for the purpose of saying that I think supporters of the government would have been much fairer to this committee and to this country as well as to the eastern provinces of Canada if, instead of those purple passages about this being the magna carta of the Atlantic provinces they had simply said what was the truth, namely that they were going to set up a development board for the Atlantic provinces which would be an advisory board whose function apparently, would be to collect data, to look into the possibility of certain economic projects and to make recommendations. In other words, it would be a regional version of the national economic development board.

This resolution and the bill which will follow can be for the Atlantic provinces either invaluable or valueless, and what is done will depend entirely on the extent to which the recommendations of this board are implemented. Actually, much of its work has already been done by the Atlantic provinces economic council. APEC has produced reports on economic projects for the Atlantic provinces which are broad in scope and excellent in concept. So in actual fact