

*Government Organization*

not try to make anything of this—that efforts made in the past have not proved to be particularly successful, and he has spoken about the utilization of growth centres in regional development as a means of speeding up industrialization and development. He referred to growth centres as though they were something new which had just been discovered. Actually this concept has been familiar in the United Kingdom for many years. Reference to it was included in the recommendations made to the governments of the four Atlantic provinces a number of years ago by Professor Wilson, the Adam Smith professor of applied political economy at Glasgow University. In my former position of responsibility, I tried to persuade the appropriate federal authorities, ministers and agencies, to recognize this concept at least to the extent of not discouraging the development of growth centres, but without success. Provincial institutions such as the Nova Scotia Economic Planning Board long ago commended this principle to their governments.

The idea, of course, is that some self-generating growth of continuing momentum can be developed based upon centres which have a certain amount of concentration of industry and services. It seems this is the best way in which one can develop some economic dynamism in regions of slow growth. Though this has been urged upon the federal government, its policies for the last five years have worked precisely in reverse of this concept, and the very least I can say today is that through perversity, through a lack of willingness to examine the experience of other countries, the federal government has pursued policies working in the opposite direction to the principle of the development of growth centres, as a result of which the country has obviously lost valuable time despite the expenditure of large sums of money intended to ease economic disparity.

I warn the minister that general acceptance of the concept of growth centres will require a good deal of education and selling across the country. In this connection it is important that the minister should not overdo the concept now he has recognized it. It is particularly important that he should not establish too few growth centres, that he should not try to concentrate growth in only a few centres. If this concept is to be accepted it is vital to avoid this mistake. It is necessary that there should not be too few centres selected. In this context it is important that the minister and the government should not confuse the necessity of some degree of concentration of

resource industries, such as the fish processing facilities to which the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) has referred, with the concept of growth centres. There is no reason in the world why a centre of resource development and concentration should have to be in one of these growth centres. The government should be most careful, to the extent that it influences the choice of location or the concentration of resource industries, to keep in mind that it is not at all necessary to locate these industries in growth centres.

● (3:30 p.m.)

It is important that the minister should not push the growth centre concept too far, because if a region is to be developed it has to be developed by a balanced program. To date the growth centre concept has been underplayed. The policies of the government have directly worked against growth in areas of growth. It would be a sad mistake indeed if the government now swung over in the opposite direction, selecting too few growth centres to start with and ignoring the possibilities for developing resource industries throughout the country. There must be a balanced program of development if the concept is to work.

If I may say so without offence, now that the minister has seen a little of the light I express the hope that he will not allow that little bit of light to dazzle or blind him. I say to him: Do not overdo it. Do not oversimplify the matter, and do not neglect the important possibilities for resource development.

The second concept that the minister is adopting is that of being prepared to pay part of what one might call the break-in cost of a new industry for a period of one, two or three years. I congratulate the minister on finally accepting this view. It is another practice that has been followed in the United Kingdom. It was one of the recommendations of Professor Wilson to the governments of the four provinces. It was one of the ideas that we tried to sell to the federal government and its agencies.

Under the former trade training agreements one could get a little help for a new industry. It must be very clear to everyone that a firm or an industry which sets up business in a town or a city that does not have a highly developed industrial complex will experience much higher costs in connection with training labour and integrating an efficient work force for a year, two years or possibly three years than that firm or industry would experience on moving into a highly industrialized area.