

National Economic Development Board

I think that, even among those who have been fighting us for the last 25 years; that principle is accepted more and more; in any case, it is certainly accepted by the Canadian population.

There is no question here of playing politics when the very future of Canada is at stake; in fact, the future of coming generations, those of our children and grandchildren, is at stake.

It is pointless to pass a piece of legislation, if it is to remain inoperative. To adopt a piece of legislation is nothing; what counts is to adopt and apply it in such a way that Canada may grow and develop by means of the intelligence and talent of its people.

By so doing, Mr. Speaker, we shall efficiently fight unemployment and we shall guarantee some measure of security to each Canadian citizen. In addition, we shall ensure his personal freedom; in other words, we shall offer him security through freedom.

No one among us wants to become a slave. No one wants to be under the yoke of a government nor be dominated by some minister, government or party leader. We prize our freedom above all. Now, if we really prize our freedom, we of this august assembly, the House of Commons—the drawing room of the nation, as it is called throughout Canada—should make a stand for the development of our natural resources. Now, that bill, setting up an economic board which will guide and increase production, does not solve our problem, which is one of distribution. If it is a problem of distribution, it follows therefore that the bill setting up a national economic development board should see to it, first of all, that production reaches its objective, which is to provide for the needs of Canadian consumers.

At that time, we shall have done a service not only to our electors but also to the population of Canada as a whole, and we shall have proven to the world at large that Canada is able to manage its own affairs by itself. Canada can create something and give the world at large the example of peace, justice and security in freedom.

(Text):

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, everybody in the house, as outside the house, has latterly spoken in favour of some form of planning. It is true that the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) apparently prefers the word "orientation" to "planification", but even he emphasizes the need for some form of planning in this country.

In order to understand and discuss the principles of the bill before us I think one has to keep in mind some other agencies

which the government has presented to this parliament. Those of us who have believed for a long time in social and economic planning were always confronted with the accusation that planning would mean a proliferation of boards and that it would mean many instruments of bureaucracy. Our opponents were wrong in that criticism of the kind of planning we have been advocating, but the same people have now implemented their erroneous understanding of planning for the purposes of this Canada of ours. Now we do have a proliferation of so-called planning agencies, unrelated one to the other in their set-up and without any kind of integration either of their work, their studies, their plans, or their conclusions.

Let me remind the house, Mr. Speaker, that we have the board proposed by the bill now before us, the national economic development board, to consist of from 14 to 24 members, with all but the chairman working in spare time. Then we have the Atlantic development board established just the other day by legislation. It is to be composed of five members, all of them spare time. Then we have the advisory council on industrial change and manpower adjustment, which is part of a bill presently before parliament. That bill does not tell us the number of members on the council, but only the chairman is to receive any remuneration. Finally, we have the national productivity council the membership of which it is proposed to increase from 25 to 28, and not one of the members of that council is full time. Each one of them is to do the work in his spare time.

Thus we have at least four agencies, and there are others as well, with only one person who will be full time of the entire group of members on all the agencies, namely the chairman of the board being created by the bill now before us. Mr. Speaker, we are to assign to these groups of men who are to give their spare time to the work, the task of planning our economy, the re-allocation of industry, the productivity of our economy and all the other tasks that have to be performed.

Mr. Speaker, I call that cocktail planning. A lot of busy industrial executives and leaders of labour and agriculture are to be brought together from time to time and, over cocktails and a leisurely meal, they are to try to plan the economy of Canada. This cannot be done. This indeed will not be done. This kind of proposal is characteristic of a government and a party which do not really believe in economic planning but which are paying lip service to that which has become popular the world over, and are attempting