

Atlantic Development Board Act

the board with which it could carry out these projects, is in my view rather ridiculous. During the last session of parliament the Conservative government proposed the setting up of another advisory council, and I suggested there were already a multiplicity of such bodies. At least we will now have \$100 million appropriated, with which some action can be taken. As far as we in western Canada are concerned—in Alberta in particular—we think this amendment is appropriate; we think something like this should be done. However, we think there should be some teeth in the act, or at least some power given to this board so that if they find, as a result of their studies, that something beneficial can be done, they will have the wherewithal to do it.

The only other point I should like to make, Mr. Chairman, is that the Conservative members seem to be taking great exception to changing the number of board members from five to 11. They say that six persons belonging to the Liberal party will be appointed to the board, and this will satisfy some political pay-off which they are obliged to make. I suggest that even suggesting this is what is going to happen is tantamount to the Conservative party admitting that they put five Conservatives on the board for the same unworthy reason they allege against the present government. I think that now they have admitted doing this, we have had enough of belittling each other's motives.

Clause 1 agreed to.

On clause 2—

Mr. Flemming (Victoria-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the Secretary of State has anything to say with regard to the amendment contained in clause 2?

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a word with regard to the amendment suggested in clause 2. I recognize that this will undoubtedly be the most controversial part of the bill. I must say that I think the hon. member from Medicine Hat said better than I could what must run through the mind of every objective person, that those who are suggesting—and no one on this side of the house has suggested it—that primarily partisan appointments would be made, must be speaking from a rather guilty conscience.

The present Prime Minister indicated clearly the kind of people he thought should be on this board. He thought the fishing industry should be represented by someone directly connected with it, which is not the case at present. He thought there should be a representative of organized labour, which there is not at present. He thought that someone with a real, definite connection with

agriculture should be on this board, which there is not at present. I think everybody realizes that of all the resources, even including the fishery, the greatest resource of the four Atlantic provinces is the forest resource. There certainly should be at least one representative of the forest industry on this board if it is at all adequately to represent the various sources from which we can expect economic development generally to flow. I admit we thought the number suggested by one of the members of the New Democratic party was a little large. I think my hon. friend the Secretary of State for External Affairs was inclined to support the view of the N.D.P. when we were in opposition, and I was inclined to take a more conservative line. But when, in considering this bill, we came to look at the various aspects of the economy of this area, we concluded that they could not all be adequately represented unless there were 11 members.

I repeat: admirable as the present members are, they do not represent a large enough variety of occupations in that area. As to the question whether the terms are to be continued as they were before, I pointed out at the resolution stage that we are not doing what the Conservative government did when they abolished the federal district commission and set up the national capital commission: they just fired everybody. Some hon. members over there talked about decency in these matters. All those people were wiped out at once. It would have been easy for us to have brought in a bill which would have done exactly the same. But we did not think this was a proper thing to do. We thought we should recognize the beginning which had been made by hon. gentlemen opposite, and I have never said a word from the day this act came into force in criticism of it at all. I wished the board well the day the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton, sitting over here, introduced the measure. I wished them well and hoped they would get on with the job.

We felt that if we had done away with the existing board and started over again it would have been regarded as a partisan act. It would not have been worthy of the purpose we had in mind. That is why we decided the present members of the board should continue to hold their positions. But as hon. members have pointed out, this board is to have \$100 million of the taxpayers' money to spend, for which the government generally, and myself in particular, have to take responsibility before this parliament. We are entitled to be satisfied that the people to whom we entrust this money are in general harmony with the ideas of the government, which will be held accountable for what is done. So long as we