

necessary jobs for people to lead a dignified life. Yet there is nothing in this agency in that regard. All there is, is passing reference to consultation with other Departments, hence the folly of the Bill.

The objective of the agency is to promote and assist small and medium-sized business. If one had been listening to broadly-based consultation one would have clearly and unequivocally heard that the people of Atlantic Canada want some form of state funding for infrastructure. Infrastructure takes on many forms. I believe one of the fundamental factors in turning around an economy is the human resource. That resource has to be educated and well-informed about what is going on domestically as well as internationally. All we have is passing reference to the Government trying to co-ordinate efforts with other agencies of the Government of Canada.

● (1620)

My colleague and I travelled extensively in Atlantic Canada. We heard brief after brief after brief from concerned individuals and organizations requiring and asking the Government of Canada to provide some infrastructure moneys whether on the human resource side or on the municipal side. The services and amenities that we have in Atlantic Canada are not on a par with other regions of the country. There have been some moneys directed in that regard, but suffice it to say that an insufficient amount of moneys has been directed in that regard. I think, with regard to infrastructure, notwithstanding the fears of provincial Premiers—provincial Premiers of a different political stripe than mine but the same as the Governments—there are no moneys for infrastructure, none whatsoever. I suggest to the Government that that is a mistake on its part.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, I am told, and I hope government Members will avail themselves of the opportunity to correct me, will be centered in Moncton, with its President living in Halifax, travelling back and forth, and with offices in the various provinces. The inadequacies of this agency are clearly spelled out in this way.

The estimates for 1988 to 1989 show the research and analytical staff complement of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agencies as representing 49 management person-years, 140 administration and foreign services, and just a mere 19 scientific professional staff. Is this agency equipped with the scientific and professional staff to do the job in the shortest period of time humanly possible and equipped to do its job well? The answer will be unmitigated delay after delay after delay as the agency checks with another Department to shuffle paper from there over to the agency and back to another agency. We will be in a time-locked situation where applicants will become frustrated, where entrepreneurs and people of goodwill and good intention will become frustrated to the extent that they will want to go elsewhere.

The Government has introduced this Bill to establish among others the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation. If there has

*Government Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987*

ever been a situation that is so stupid, it has been the Government's decision to do what it is doing in this particular Bill. A previous speaker today talked about the money of Enterprise Cape Breton and the opportunities it is trying to provide in that particular region. The Bill does not recognize the history which has been associated with the Cape Breton Development Division for some 20 years. This was an industrial development division that worked hand in hand with another division, the coal division, in assisting workers who may have had to be replaced in trying to start new businesses or getting into a new line of employment. They worked together. If there is one thing that I have learned about regional economic development policy it is that it takes time. Yes, it takes money and political will, but it also takes time. What the Government is doing by gutting the industrial development division of DEVCO and placing it in a separate Crown corporation is taking 20 years of working with the community, business in the private and in the public sector, and wiping it off.

I do not share—and I say that with great respect—the comments of the Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso (Mr. O'Neil) when he said, "you are turning back to the past". What unmitigated nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Every economist in the regional economic field will tell you that when you address that particular subject there are long time frames. We saw it in the Richmond County Development Corporation where, for a four or five year period, people were falling over themselves. Wrong management decisions were made, but because of the mistakes and the educational process that goes on within, management has been able to turn it around and has made the corporation a positive force for that particular area of our province. This agency, the Cape Breton Development Corporation, in its industrial development division has assisted countless numbers of individuals in Cape Breton.

Of course, the critics will ask, what is wrong with making it a separate Crown corporation? What is wrong with doing that? It is very clear. The mandates are different. The programs may appear to be similar, but there are different mandates. The Cape Breton Development Corporation has a coal division and an industrial development division. By separating the two, this Government is trying to position the coal industry in one corner and the industrial development somewhere else. We know, through the number of actions over the last number of years, that the Government's commitment to the coal industry of Cape Breton has a lot to be desired. There are 604 men, Mr. Speaker, not four individuals, not five, but 604 who have gone from the payroll. We have a situation now where men on pre-retirement leave, who have no hope of getting employment, have to pay unemployment insurance, whereas in other pre-retirement leave plans they do not have to do that.

We have a situation with the coal industry where the Government of Canada, is considering the possibility of providing funds for a new coal mine in Pictou County to the detriment of the Cape Breton Development Corporation coal