

Atlantic Development Board Act

I think the minister explained that the bill will include the right of direct investment. I certainly am happy to agree with this because it gives a greater freedom in certain circumstances. We in this party take seriously a national policy in respect of the redistributive development of Canada and the ironing out of the inequalities which have persisted in the past. Naturally we will support the resolution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, just a few words. First of all I wish to congratulate the minister for introducing that resolution.

The minister was hoping a little earlier that the debate on the resolution would not go on forever. That is exactly what I always hoped, for every resolution, because with only what is said in the resolution, we do not have enough information to discuss it and decide if we are for or against it.

The minister said earlier that \$50 million for the Atlantic Development Board probably was not much. I was a little surprised to hear him say: it is not that the board has run out of money but to increase the funds at its disposal to fulfill a promise made to the board. I was wondering if it was only to fulfil an election promise or to strengthen that fund in order to do something for the economy of the Atlantic provinces.

If it is for the second reason, I am all in favour of strengthening the economy of the Atlantic provinces and trying to increase their standard of living.

Therefore, I feel that the introduction of the bill is our best opportunity to study the work done by those boards. As far as my province is concerned, I found out to my great surprise, when studying the operations of those boards, that most of the funds were spent on unnecessary studies when it would have been so easy to concretize wonderful projects if the money had been saved for that purpose.

I think that it is what you are doing in the Atlantic provinces; namely concretizing projects which are already under way; that is why I am in favour of that resolution. When the bill is submitted to the house, we will have the opportunity to see what was done with the money already spent—over 50 per cent of it has undoubtedly been spent—since we are asked for another \$50 million.

We are anxious to see what was done, what the government or the board has accomplished; then we will be able to appreciate

[*Mr. Brewin.*]

what is being accomplished in the Atlantic provinces.

We are also in favour of helping the provinces because we want to help our people. It is very commendable to help foreign countries but I still prefer to see a few millions spent in the provinces to help them also. It is good to hear when travelling outside Canada that our country is wealthy, and that from countries which receive gifts from Canada. I can assure you that the Atlantic provinces, when they get that money, that help from the federal government to strengthen their economy will love their country more and will feel even closer ties with the other provinces. It is the same in all the provinces. That is how the work of the federal government in the province of Quebec is considered. When it is time, in the province of Quebec, to have assistance from the federal government—we need it also—we want it proportionately to the population.

The previous speaker said: \$50 million may not be much. But we must keep in mind that the population of the Atlantic provinces is less than that of the other provinces, than that of the province of Quebec.

For instance, when taxes are levied, they are first levied in the provinces with a greater manpower; these are the ones which provide funds to the federal government. If we want to redistribute those funds fairly, we must think, first of all of those which paid and then of those which need assistance, without being unfair toward the provinces which supplied the money to these funds.

I think that the minister will be highly considered if such resolutions are introduced in favour of the province of Quebec, because I am sure he is aware of the economic situation of Quebec and knows that it needs federal assistance also. We hope this assistance to other provinces will be given proportionately to the needy population in every province of Canada.

• (4:10 p.m.)

[*English*]

Mr. McQuaid: Mr. Chairman, I rise at this time to support this resolution because I am convinced that the establishment of the Atlantic Development Board in January of 1963 was without doubt one of the most progressive steps that has ever been taken by any government for the benefit of the Atlantic provinces.

The objectives of the board are clearly defined in the act which established it and I should like to quote from subsection 1 of