

*Atlantic Development Board Act*

**Mr. Pigeon:** I do my duty. We represent Her Majesty the Queen.

**An hon. Member:** Poor Queen.

**Mr. Patterson:** I could make a response to that but I will not. I want to assure members from the maritime area that my intervention will be brief because, having regard to the fact that they are as close to the problem as they are and that it affects their area as it does, I am sure they will want to take considerable time on this measure.

Over the years the members from the maritime provinces representing various parties have done a splendid job in acquainting the house with the problems facing their area. I would think that the reason these problems exist to the extent they do at the present time is the failure of successive federal governments to give consideration and assistance commensurate with their needs, even though it was within the power and capacity of the nation so to do.

While the debate was going on this afternoon I thought for a while it was going to degenerate into a purely political wrangle with charges and countercharges, claims and counterclaims as members tried, to use their own words, to set the record straight. However, rather than setting the record straight I think they were tending more or less to confuse the issue and making it more difficult for people to understand. I would suggest that the magnitude of the problem is such that perhaps we could forget political considerations and get ahead with the job before us.

It would seem to me that the board as now constituted probably finds itself rather handicapped in carrying on its work, in that it realizes that amendments are currently before the house which will no doubt affect its work and operations in the future. The suggestion has been made that the appointments suggested now will be purely political. I would venture to say that perhaps even in the initial stage when the board was set up last year political considerations may have entered into the picture when the Progressive Conservative government was dealing with the matter of appointments.

I rose solely to support the principle of the measure to the degree that that principle is required to make the necessary amendments to the legislation, so that the board will be more able to fulfil and discharge its responsibilities effectively. My colleagues no doubt will be participating in the detailed discussion when the bill is in the committee stage but I wanted to make these few brief observations.

**Mr. J. Chester MacRae (York-Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to enter this debate very briefly. I have no intention of delaying its completion, but to those of us who come from Atlantic Canada this is a most important subject that deals with a most important part of Canada. A few years ago I read a work on Atlantic Canada in which the author said, to use his words, that the maritimes were a poverty stricken land that occasionally sprouted a millionaire. I do not agree with this sentiment. Perhaps our land is not as good as most, but we are extremely rich in our human resources. We have given to this nation four prime ministers of Canada and one of Great Britain, as well as men like Beaverbrook, Dunn, Cyrus Eaton and many others.

We know, of course, that in 1867 when confederation was formed crepe was hung on many of the doors in Saint John and Halifax. I have always felt, and I think others do too, that those who took part in bringing about confederation made a great mistake in 1867 when the three maritime provinces were not united into one province. It would have been preferable if Newfoundland could have been included, too. However, that is all in the past and nothing can be done about it now. So we drifted for almost 90 years; but there is no question that in the last four or five years there has certainly been a tremendous awakening in our provinces by the sea. We have only to look at some of the legislation passed by the House of Commons in the last four or five years to recognize that fact. I refer to the power development act, the adjustment grants and all the other things that have been mentioned so often.

As other speakers have pointed out, this has culminated in the Atlantic provinces development board established by the previous administration, and with respect to which amendments are now being made to the act. I promised to be brief but there are three things I am concerned about in connection with the amendments to the act. The first one is the limiting of the funds. As I understood the original act it was open-end legislation, so to speak. In other words, the board would have unlimited power to recommend. We talked, and I hoped we were talking with some substance, about envisaging \$1 billion being expended in the next 10 years through the Atlantic development board. Now we find that the funds are to be limited to \$100 million and this money is to be spent for projects for which other financing is not available.

We might say that there would be public funds for practically all projects that might be recommended by the board; in other words, the ministers of transport, public works