

*Atlantic Development Board Act*

**The Chairman:** Order. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member but I am wondering if he in his remarks is now staying within the four corners of the bill before the house. As I mentioned last night there is certainly some latitude that has to be recognized by the Chair in dealing with a bill on clause 1, but on the other hand the discussion should be limited to the essence of the bill and whatever is contained in it. I would ask the co-operation of the hon. member, and other speakers who may address the committee after him, to try to limit their remarks to the bill itself.

**Mr. Churchill:** Mr. Chairman, I realize that on the first clause of a bill considerable latitude is permitted and I am grateful you gave me the opportunity to pay my respects to the Atlantic provinces. Having offered my criticism of the government's lack of wisdom in making these modifications to the act, I now want to say that increasing membership of the board from five to 11 is too obviously a partisan trick. It is an assurance that there will be six appointees of the present government to offset the five appointees of last winter. That was too obvious, and it will not be overlooked by the people who live in the Atlantic provinces.

Our second main objection, of course, is the setting of a fixed sum to be made available to the board for distribution among the Atlantic provinces. We think this is an unwise move. Here again, if the government had waited until the board had been given an opportunity to examine all the factors involved and had put forward recommendations as to where the emphasis needs to be laid on the development of the Atlantic provinces, there might have been some wisdom in coming forward and fixing a sum to be made available. But suddenly we get an amendment to this act and \$100 million—which sounds a great deal of money until you consider the projects that could be carried out by it when divided among four provinces, and then it does not sound very much at all—is fixed as the amount the board will have to spend on this development. It looks too much like an attempt to pay off some ridiculous promise that was made during an election campaign, and it appears to an outside observer that a ceiling is being set on the amount of money that will be available, which was never the intention of the previous Conservative administration. Our problem was to make it possible to assist the Atlantic provinces and wait for recommendations from the board as to how much financial assistance should be given; consequently we did not set any limit of \$100 million on the amount which might eventually be voted by parliament.

Third, Mr. Chairman, setting up the money aside like this is giving the board more authority than it should have. The authority should rest with parliament. In the control of expenditures in this country parliament should have the supervision it has exercised in the past and now exercises over most of the expenditures made by parliament.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to say just these few words with regard to the bill to indicate the interest of our party in the Atlantic provinces; to indicate the interest of people who live elsewhere than in the Atlantic provinces in the problems of that area. My hope is that the present government will stop tinkering with acts that are already on the statute books, and projects that our government introduced for the benefit of various areas of Canada, and will take this as a warning to be very careful with regard to the other matters we introduced in the past—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Churchill:** —which have proven to be highly effective. I warn them against interfering with western Canada in the way they are now interfering with the Atlantic provinces. The bill will probably go through the house this afternoon, up to the third reading stage. However, I think as members of an opposition we are bound to draw attention to some of the mistakes which hon. gentlemen opposite are making.

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to say one or two words on this bill involving amendments to the Atlantic development board. I believe that the Atlantic Development Board Act, without the amendments which are going to be introduced by this bill, was sterile, if I may use that word. I remember raising the objection in the last session of parliament, that no useful function could be performed by the Atlantic development board unless it had some funds with which to do something. For example, there was the Atlantic provinces council, which is commonly referred to as APEC, which could give the government all the advice it needed respecting development in the Atlantic provinces. Also, those branches of the various provincial departments which are concerned with industry could have made, and probably have already made, thorough and exhaustive investigations in this respect and could offer advice to the federal government as to what they should do.

Then there was, of course, the productivity council which was set up to give advice on regional matters to the federal government, and advice on matters involving the whole country. We now have a new department of industry which has regional responsibilities. To now say that the act was good enough before, when there was no money provided to