

say that research and development must be increased. Exactly the opposite happens. They say that trade with Europe will increase. Precisely the opposite happens. They say that regional disparities are to be eliminated. Exactly the opposite will happen.

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The government says it will develop an industrial strategy to make industry the backbone of this country; exactly the opposite will happen.

Looking at the record, one could be forgiven for concluding that the Liberal government is plainly dishonest. However, according to recent evidence, it is not a matter of dishonesty but, rather, a matter of incompetence. It is not that the ministers of the Trudeau government, and there have been many over the years, were dishonest about where they wanted the country to go but, rather, that the Prime Minister and his ministers lacked the competence to take us there.

Many of us have long suspected that that was the case, but a book has been published within the last month which verifies this view and this position. The book to which I am referring is entitled "How Ottawa Decides—Planning and Industrial Policy-making, 1968 to 1980". It conveniently covers the years of the Trudeau administration. It is written by a gentleman who is now a professor at McGill University but who had been for a number of years a highly placed member of the Prime Minister's personal department, the Privy Council office. The author describes how the Prime Minister, his cabinet and his government set about to plan the new nirvana or the Utopia Canada was to become upon the succession to power of this great new guru who currently leads us.

Mr. French describes the sophisticated, highly technical and modern decision-making processes put in place by this Prime Minister when he assumed office. He said to the Liberal party at a Harrison Hot Springs conference in, I believe, 1970 that we no longer had to be just chips of wood on a stream and going to wherever the universe takes us, but that we have control over our own future, that our own view of the future dictates what the future will be and that through these sophisticated planning techniques we would get there. They were sophisticated. There was a cabinet committee system, a Treasury Board system, an expenditure budget process and a finance planning system. They were marvellous systems, but they turned out to be an absolute and total disaster, according to Mr. French, an experienced officer who participated in the process and who now writes as an academic and not as a partisan of any political party.

In particular, Mr. French explains how an industrial strategy for Canada was a specific victim of this chaos which passed for planning in the Trudeau government and how instead of a coherent industrial strategy and a proper economic development policy we ended up with ad hockery and political opportunism, with the industrial strategy as its chief victim. Instead of coherent policy we have had ad hockery of the worst kind. Decisions have been taken or not taken based on short-term political exigencies, the influence of particular ministers, the

imminence of an election or byelection or just plain lethargy. One has to wonder how different Canada's constitutional debate might be if, instead of this dismal failure of the federal Trudeau Liberal government with economic policy and industrial strategy, it had developed and stuck to a coherent policy.

The basic argument for a strong central government is that the federal government must have control over the main economic levers in order to manage the economy for the common good. The federal government states—and no one disputes it—that to be a country we must have, at the very least, a common market. There must be a fair and equitable distribution of the nation's wealth. There must be a coincidence of goals. We must have a coherence and a consistency toward common objectives; we must approach, react to or deal with the rest of the world as one strong entity and not be a loose coalition of ten smaller entities.

No one disputes as being a desirable goal that view of a strong central government. However, when we look at the record of the last ten years, we inescapably reach the conclusion that this Liberal government knows not or at least cannot deliver a coherent national economic development policy, and therefore there is great reluctance to extend to it more power than it already has.

I know the Prime Minister and his apologists have a great deal of difficulty understanding people who say they want a strong and united Canada but do not support his position on more economic power for the federal government. If the Prime Minister wants an explanation for that, he need look no further than at his own performance and the performance of his government. The reality is that for ten years people in this country have been looking to this government and asking what are our national goals, what is our industrial strategy and what is our economic development policy. Do we have a coherent set of goals? None is available, as I have pointed out. In fact, the performance of the government and the economy has been in the opposite direction to that which the government indicated as the desirable goal.

Citizens observe this, and as constitutional questions come up and as they ask to whom they want more power to accrue—to the federal government, which has had this ten years of chaos, ad hockery and failure, or to provincial governments, which know and understand people a little better and under which there have not been ten years of ad hockery, chaos and failure—naturally there is tendency to suggest that perhaps we should give the provincial governments a chance, because obviously the federal government has failed dismally. If we want to find the reason for this apparent paradox wherein people are saying they believe in a strong, united Canada but that they want more provincial power, we really do not have to look any further than that, and I wonder how different the debate on constitutional questions might be today if, instead of this kind of failure in economic policy and industrial strategy, we had had a record of consistency, aggressiveness, fairness and so forth from this government and there had been a strategy which had been adhered to by the government.