

government is to recruit 300 people from those who are already engaged in various programs to the benefit of the Atlantic provinces, then we start worrying.

● (1420)

I really do not know whether it should be 300 people or 500 people, but what I am concerned about—and what the people of New Brunswick are starting to look at—is the fact that if we get those people who are now working in existing programs, and bring them into this new agency, it will be hard to convince New Brunswickers that this will be an addition to all of the programs that already exist.

Sometimes we have to listen to what is said and also to what is not said. If this is new money, then it is new money on top of what? If it is new money on top of money that has been expended in the Atlantic provinces by this government, then it does not amount to new money, because it would be less than what has been expended in years gone by. If it is new money, then I want to know that it is new money, and that it is new money on top of what? I want to know if it is going to include joint programs, whether some of that money will be used for joint federal-provincial programs, or whether it will be \$200 million per year added to what should have been there and what was there prior to 1984, as has been pointed out by Senator Olson and Senator MacEachen.

In closing, I would say that there is potential there. The Leader of the Government is raising the hopes of people in the Atlantic provinces. You did that in 1984, and then sadly disappointed them. We accept your appointment; we accept the \$200 million; but we have to reserve our jubilation for a year down the road.

Senator Olson: Action first.

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, I would be remiss in my duties as a senator if I did not congratulate Senator Murray on taking on this task. Senator Murray is a man who understands Atlantic Canada, and although he represents that riding in Ontario, he still has his heart in Atlantic Canada. I feel that the Prime Minister could not have picked a better man, unless it were myself.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Frith: You are number two. That's not bad.

Senator Bonnell: Senator Murray, as Leader of the Government, does a good job here. When answering questions he keeps cool, he conducts himself in a pleasant manner, and we all like him. However, there is one thing about which I feel a little sad. He will have to spend a lot of time now in Atlantic Canada, because the problems there are tremendous. I would like to suggest to him that he go to the Prime Minister and ask that he appoint either Senator Doody or Senator Phillips as a member of the government, not necessarily with a portfolio, so that we can get answers in the Senate and be informed.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator MacEachen: Why not both of them?

Senator Bonnell: I really believe that we in the Senate deserve someone here all the time to answer questions on behalf of the government. But at the same time I do not want Senator Murray to be here all of the time since the job that he has to do in Atlantic Canada is very important if we are to bring that part of the country back into Confederation, because it has been forgotten.

The other day, when he talked about Meech Lake, I thought that if I were the Premier of Prince Edward Island, I would have said, "Yes, I want special status for Prince Edward Island." The reason why I want special status for Prince Edward Island is because I cannot even visit New Brunswick, the next province, without having to pay for the simple fact of setting foot in the province. If I were in Ontario, I could go to Manitoba, and if I were in Manitoba, I could go to Saskatchewan. I could go to Ontario. I cannot even have the privilege of having a friend of mine come from Nova Scotia to see me without having to pay for crossing from one province to another. But someone from British Columbia can go to Alberta and it does not cost five cents to do so. As a Prince Edward Islander, I need special status, along with people from Newfoundland, to put me on an equal footing with the rest of Canada. I say to the Leader of the Government in the Senate that with this \$105 billion the first thing we should do is equalize the transportation system in those two provinces, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, as promised in Confederation, and take away that fee so that I can travel freely among the provinces as I should be able to do in the same fashion as all other Canadians.

After that, perhaps we will have a few dollars left over for some other things. The next thing I would suggest by way of special status for Prince Edward Island is a pipeline. Trans-Canada Pipelines has a pipeline that can bring cheap gas down to Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, but I, as a Prince Edward Islander, have to pay the high price for gas. Therefore, the next thing you might do with the \$1.05 billion is make sure that we get that gas down in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland at the same price as they are paying in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Then, Mr. Minister, the next thing you should look at is transportation. In Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland you took away our railroads. Perhaps we should now have an up-to-date road system so that we can transport our goods. I say to you, Mr. Minister, before you do anything else with that \$1.05 billion, perhaps you should inflate the status of those two provinces so that we are kind of half equal with the rest of the provinces, instead of having special status.

The next thing you should then look at is protecting our fisheries so that we do not let the French or the Americans take them away. Perhaps if we get that area straightened out, we will end up a little more equal with the rest of Canada, before you start spending the rest of that money.

Therefore, Mr. Minister, if I had been the Premier of Prince Edward Island during the negotiations on that Meech Lake accord, I would have said, "I am prepared to sign this accord. I think it is wonderful to have Quebec rejoin the family.