

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

has been a miserable flop—mere window-dressing for the ineptitude of the federal government and the former Liberal government of Newfoundland. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the last meeting of the so-called Argentia task force was in June, 1971, more than a year ago. The last report submitted by the chairman of the task force was on April 28, 1971, and but for the fact that Mr. Page was summoned to appear as a witness before the Standing Committee on Regional Development on that date, April 28, 1971, I am confident that no report would have been submitted at that time.

I have no doubt that the minister in his reply tonight will paint a very glowing picture of the task force and the vast improvements that have come about as a result of its performance over the past two years. He will tell the House of the number of jobs that have been created in Castle Hill historic park, the vocational training school, the tourist chalet and the upgrading of the road to Long Harbour. But the truth of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that less than a dozen full-time jobs have been created by the federal government or through the efforts of their task force.

The federal government's reaction to the very serious problems that exist in the area as a result of the naval station phase-down is another blatant example of the government's band-aid policy, a temporary cure for the very serious social and economic problems that are prevalent in the Placentia area. It is a little ironic, Mr. Speaker, that despite the promise that was contained in the Minister of Transport's statement back in 1970 with respect to the abandoned facilities at the United States naval station, with one exception they still remain vacant. No new industries have established in the area and no real effort has been made by the Argentia task force or the federal government to offer any worth-while incentives to companies who have expressed an interest in the area.

The overcrowding of classrooms in the area continues to become more acute despite the commitment made by the task force chairman at its last meeting that he would address himself to that problem and would leave no stone unturned to find a solution. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the federal-provincial resettlement program in Newfoundland, which encouraged more than 200 families to relocate in the Placentia area, an impossible burden has been placed on existing school facilities, a burden which is beyond the capacity of the school board to overcome and, I might add, has been a serious detriment to the other areas within the jurisdiction of the school board where adequate classroom and other facilities are lacking.

The time has come for action. Unless the Argentia task force and its chairman are willing and able to tackle the many and varied problems in the area, it should be abolished and replaced with a more aggressive body. The unemployed men and women in the Placentia area can ill afford the luxury of a high-sounding federal task force that lacks a full time director and secretariat, which meets less than once a year, which has a chairman who has not visited the area for over a year and who has not submitted a report in 16 months.

[Mr. Carter.]

• (2210)

We want action. We want it immediately. We want to know what the government's policy is with respect to DREE grants to companies which express an interest in setting up operations in one of the United States government's abandoned buildings. We want a full-fledged development corporation established which would take as its prime objective that of negotiating with the United States government, through the Department of External Affairs, a satisfactory arrangement with respect to the future use of the buildings on the base abandoned by the United States. It is inconceivable that no real effort has been made by the Argentia task force or the federal government to negotiate with the United States government a more satisfactory arrangement with respect to these facilities.

I understand that at the present time occupancy of these buildings, which in most cases are ideally suited for private enterprise, is on a tenure of anywhere from one year to 30 days. We want the federal government to designate the entire Placentia area as a special area under DREE. We want assistance from the federal government to help overcome the very serious overcrowding in our schools. We want the federal government, under DREE, to concern itself with the need for improved municipal infrastructure in the area, thereby creating a healthier climate in which to encourage the private sector to establish.

To sum up, Mr. Speaker, we want the federal government to accept its responsibility to the people of the Placentia area who continue to suffer the misery of unemployment and of not knowing what the future holds for them or if, indeed, they have a future.

**Mr. D. R. Tolmie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the task force has prepared a number of reports and these have been transmitted to the minister. With the concurrence of the provincial government, a last meeting of the Argentia task force has been scheduled for July 6. After this meeting a final report on the results of the work of the task force will be prepared. The minister will be pleased to table this report when it becomes available.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY—WHITE LAKE DOMINION  
RADIO ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY

**Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I asked the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) what steps the department was taking to protect the valuable scientific work being done by the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory at Penticton. Mr. Speaker suggested that the matter be raised at this time, and I welcome the opportunity to expand on this important scientific project.

On June 14 I moved a motion in the House that the question of the observatory and the severe damage which would result to its outstanding research facilities in the event of encroachment on its land by subdivisions be referred to the appropriate standing committee for study and report. Unfortunately, the motion did not receive the necessary unanimous agreement.