

The Commission always had staffed offices both in Ottawa and Washington. As of last year, pursuant to an agreement signed on April 15, 1972 between President Nixon and Prime Minister Trudeau, we opened a regional office at Windsor.

Hon. Mr. Martin: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Robichaud: I know that the Leader of the Government in the Senate is very happy that this office was opened in Windsor. There is quite a story behind its location, and perhaps I will be in a position later on to explain privately, if not publicly, the reasons why this office was located in Canada rather than in the United States.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: Careful!

Hon. Mr. Robichaud: I am always careful.

Since the creation of the Commission, close to one hundred references have been submitted to it by the two governments, and after extensive studies and public hearings it has recommended solutions that have been almost always accepted and acted upon by the two governments. It now has some thirty boards charged with the responsibility of monitoring the quality or level of water and reporting twice a year in a formal way to the Commission and once a month in an informal way.

● (1430)

In my opinion the most important issues ever submitted to the Commission have been the harnessing of the Columbia River, the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the water quality of the Great Lakes, the water level of the Great Lakes, and the Richelieu-Champlain water level. Others that have come close in the order of magnitude have been the Skagit River reference, the air quality in the Windsor-Detroit area, and the Lake of the Woods reference. There have been hundreds of them.

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement stipulates, among other things, that "Programs and other measures directed toward the achievement of the water quality objectives shall be developed and implemented as soon as practicable in accordance with legislation in the two countries. Unless otherwise agreed, such programs and other measures shall be either completed or in process of implementation by December 31, 1975."

I am afraid that a large number of people, both Canadians and Americans, interpreted that language as meaning that, by December 31, 1975, the Great Lakes will return, or will be returned, to their primitive condition, that is, completely clean. That view is too optimistic. It will take a number of years to achieve the objectives that the International Joint Commission has set for itself, but these objectives will eventually be met. It will cost billions of dollars, but the money will have to be raised and it will be raised, I am sure.

As far as Canada is concerned, we are on schedule, even perhaps ahead of schedule, and most of the credit is due to the foresightedness of the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada for this situation. While, on the United States side, eight states, some 160 municipal governments and hundreds of industries are involved, we, however, are in the advantageous position that we have only one province bordering the Great Lakes. The problem

[Hon. Mr. Robichaud.]

is thus much more complicated on the other side of the border, but I am confident there is a sufficient amount of goodwill and determination to conquer it.

Honourable senators, when I entered political life I was motivated by two primary motives quite apart from the ordinary anticipation of excitement which any New Brunswicker, or any Canadian for that matter, might seek in politics. One was the hope of doing something, eventually, toward a better material life for the people of my province. The other was the chance to contribute something to the unity of two peoples who, in my province, had lived side by side from the very beginning of that jurisdiction: equal opportunity within the framework of a unified Canadian confederation. Those motives continue to be my guides as I come into another atmosphere, or sphere, rather, of national political activity. "Atmosphere" would fit just as well there.

The two major groups in New Brunswick, which, for the sake of brevity, may be designated as English and French, created an electoral majority which gave me and my colleagues a chance to move our province some considerable distance toward these two goals.

They gave us their confidence and for ten years—the entire decade of the 1960s—we did things which I am now proud to believe moved my province and its citizens into a new era of economic and social equality.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Robichaud: Honourable senators, the period of reform was not an easy one and I will not now recount the trials and the tribulations of that period. We had considerable help from two federal administrations. I have no doubt that today that continues to be the case. Those administrations were sympathetic to the long-standing needs and appeals of a province which was far behind the others in sharing the prosperity and social advances of a great and rich nation.

● (1440)

There remains a long way to go, but if I say that we had a role in starting our fellow citizens along this road you will understand that I say it not as a matter of personal pride but as representing the pride of the people of New Brunswick. Without their active participation, nothing could have been achieved. We could not wait for circumstances to overcome the disparities of generations. If reforms were to be made, we ourselves had to take the initiative—and we took it.

Policies to overcome regional disparity have been central themes in political debate and government action for decades. They are the very essence of what many Canadians think of when pondering national unity and national purpose. All Canadians support fairness and equity, and all Canadians can see the value of all efforts to provide reasonable standards of services throughout our country, and reasonable opportunities for our citizens both to contribute to and share in our economic progress.

The sometimes elaborate but effective techniques we have devised to achieve our objectives have accomplished much. Our system of equalization, the many shared-cost programs, the diverse special agencies concerned with problems specific to particular areas or regions, have yielded an outstanding record of achievement. Central to