

*Atlantic Development Board Act*

is not being held up; it is being very carefully considered. Hon. members from the Atlantic provinces have pointed out that there was no need for rushing ahead with amendments to an act which was brought into operation just a few months ago. Without letting the board function and get on with its job, the government which made so many promises, most of which have been unfulfilled up to the present, wants to rush ahead and amend the act before it has been given a proper trial.

Once again, this is undue haste. This is a matter of taking a good look at what the government is attempting to do, and it is not a question of holding up the bill. One of the reasons I rose to speak is that I do not think a bill of this nature should be left solely to the people from the Atlantic provinces, although they are the best qualified to deal with its subject matter. However, there are others of us who are also interested in the development of the Atlantic provinces, as we are in the development of all other areas of Canada. Coming from Manitoba I did not think it was right for the Secretary of State to be the only person from that province to speak on the bill.

There is a community of interest between those of us who live in western Canada and those who live in the Atlantic provinces. We represent great primary producing areas, and over my years in the house I have noticed that community of interest between westerners and those in the Atlantic provinces. We understand each others' problems and difficulties. We in western Canada have had the problem of developing a very large area of the country. Our ancestors certainly passed through a pioneering stage. Ours is a primary producing area and we are familiar with the problem which face the Atlantic provinces, which also form a primary producing area.

In the west we have been pressing forward with industrial development, and the people in the Atlantic provinces are interested in the same type of development. In the west we have been faced with the problem of adverse freight rates which have hindered our industrial growth and so we can appreciate, without much explanation or argument, the problems facing the Atlantic provinces with regard to long freight hauls to central Canada.

It is on the basis of that community of interest that I rise to speak on this bill and to express my regrets that the government is making modifications before the act, passed last winter, has had a chance to be put into operation. That is an unskilful way of carrying on the business of the country. Offhand it is not a question of whether the proposed amendments are necessary or are an improvement. The government has not had experience of the operation of the act to

determine whether amendments are required now or later. It is another example of the government rushing in where angels fear to tread. It has made so many mistakes I suppose we should go ahead and pass everything it brings in front of us, so that it may make more mistakes and get the country in a really confused state of affairs. However, I suggest that it slow down a little bit and think things through before rushing in with further amendments to other things that have been done.

As the Conservative party we take great pride in the interest which we showed in the Atlantic provinces during our term of office, and we take pride in the bill we introduced last winter, setting up this board. Our predecessors had plenty of opportunity to indicate the same interest in the Atlantic provinces but they failed to do so.

During the years when I was previously sitting in opposition I recall the occasions when my colleagues from the Atlantic provinces rose to put forward the case for those provinces, and time and again I said to them, "Keep it up; you have got to impress the requirements of your area on public opinion". They used to say to me, "We get tired of listening to western members talking about wheat". But, Mr. Chairman, unless western members talk about wheat, freight rates and industrial development they will not get the necessary attention from the central government here in Ottawa. Therefore I told them in those days, "You must do the same; don't be bashful about it". I may say now that they have not been bashful. They have presented their case and presented it well, but the Liberal administration prior to 1957 did not give the attention to the Atlantic provinces that should have been given, and when we took office we took immediate action to see that economic development was given a boost in the Atlantic provinces.

The legislation we introduced last fall and winter for this Atlantic development board was just part of the general interest that the Conservative party has shown in the development of that section of Canada whose people have made such a contribution to the life of the nation. Those of us from western Canada have to acknowledge with gratitude and respect the contribution of those who have come from the Atlantic provinces and settled in the western provinces. Now and again they boast a little bit about the positions which they have occupied in western Canada, positions of importance based on the strength of their education and the force of their intellect, and we gratefully acknowledge—