

*Canadian Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987*

mining operation which could be used to assist other enterprises within the Cape Breton community which were participating in the Industrial Development Division programs. That is very important to the success of many programs. The Industrial Development Division was also able to respond when, for example, there was a fire in a colliery and a particular mine had to be shut down. The assets of DEVCO were able to be used in conjunction with the other aspects of the Industrial Development Division programs to create new opportunities and employment.

After the House voted on amendments to that legislation, and those amendments have been turned down, this House ultimately has the final say in voting in favour of the legislation, so I reject the notion that the Senate can then alter the Bill in a substantial way as it has done. What would stop the Senate, in that case, from taking any Bill passed by this House, no matter which Government, and chopping it up into little pieces because the Bill did not suit the Senate? That would destroy the effectiveness and privileges of Members of this House to carry on their mandate from the people of Canada who elected them to pass legislation and get on with the business of Government.

● (1210)

We in the New Democratic Party supported amendments, both in committee and in the House, which would have separated the Bill. In effect, they would have done the same thing as the Senate has done. We voted on those amendments and they were lost. The Bill, in its original form with certain amendments which were accepted, was passed along to the Senate and has come back mangled. It was changed in a way that perhaps we would have liked to have seen. In fact, if the amendments by Members on this side of the House had been accepted, the Bill would have the same appearance as it has now coming back from the Senate.

We cannot accept the fact that the Senate, having received the wishes of this House, decided to act in so drastic a way, as the Speaker has ruled, to breach the privileges of this House. They are privileges which we must claim as Members of Parliament.

However, I reject with great force the contention of the Government that delay of this legislation will destroy the program as it now exists. The Government, through ACOA, is still spending money. That is something that has been going on for many months. The Government is very much overstating the consequences of a delay of this nature since under the new program of ACOA money has been handed out quite regularly in the form of grants. The details of those grants and criticisms of them are another issue.

It strikes me as very hypocritical when we hear Liberal Members of the House talk about their commitment to regional development. For much of the last 20 years since 1968 when the Industrial Development Division of DEVCO was established we have seen activities by the Government, most of

which have been Liberal Governments, which have given Cape Breton an unemployment of 15.3 per cent, as reported today in *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald*. In all of Newfoundland and Labrador there is an unemployment rate of approximately 17.3 per cent. In many parts of Newfoundland and in whole statistical divisions there is an unemployment rate of 28 per cent.

We see a history over the last 20 years of regional development programs of both Conservative and Liberal Governments which have not resulted in any real commitment to changing the unfortunate realities in Canada wherein the unemployment rate in Newfoundland, in Cape Breton and the Maritimes is unacceptably high.

We have seen a program unveiled by the Government which has made some improvements under the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. It has some features that we welcome. There is the feature of flexibility in terms of granting and programs that can respond to the different needs of the Atlantic provinces. Indeed, one of the major defects of existing programs or pre-existing programs was that, although they were designed in Ottawa, they did not take into account the realities of economic and industrial life in the Atlantic provinces. They were not successful. We hope that with ACOA there will be improvements in that rate of success.

Therefore, the measures that were taken in the whole were supported, despite the fact that there were serious flaws. One of the most serious was the destruction of the Industrial Development Division of the Cape Breton Development Corporation, which had been put together and which had worked very well as a model. It was not successful in moving full employment in Cape Breton. It still left an unemployment rate of 15 per cent. However, in terms of the model of the type of activities that could be undertaken on a regional basis within a part of a province of Canada it was a successful model. It did not receive the total commitment of the Liberal Government before this one, and obviously it has no commitment from the present Government which has set out to destroy it.

These points with respect to the attitude taken toward the Senate by the Government are most important. We support the motion which is before us. The reason we support the motion is that we must, as the House of Commons, rise up and claim our privileges against the Senate. We must insist that the Senate respect the privileges of the House, despite the fact that the changes made to the legislation are ones that we ourselves would have made in this House. Those changes, once denied by this House as a body, must not be imposed upon this House by the Senate.

We support the motion. We support the message to be sent to the Senate to claim the privileges of this House against the Senate.