

*Natural Resources—Development*

None of us like to think that the development of our country by regions is uneven, but under the present hit-or-miss private enterprise system we find that there are regions of Canada that are depressed, and the most depressed of the regions is the maritime region. As I said, I did not have time to look up data, but I happen to have on my desk some figures on the relative positions of the various parts of Canada which I used elsewhere a short time ago. For example, the average per capita personal income by provinces clearly indicates that in 1954, the last year for which I have figures, Ontario and Quebec led all Canada and the maritime regions certainly brought up the rear. From a high income of \$1,470 per capita in the province of Ontario we go right down to \$640 in Newfoundland, with New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island only slightly better than the per capita income for Newfoundland. Now, that is not good enough.

If we had a proper development policy, we could see to it that the benefits of development were spread more evenly over the several regions. Even within provinces there are grave discrepancies of personal income. Many people in Canada are not enjoying the benefits they should be enjoying. We have often spoken in this house of our old age pensioners. In 1949 the old age pension was increased to \$40, and if we take the value of what a dollar would purchase then that is equivalent to only \$32 in 1957 purchasing power. Today, it takes \$40 to buy what \$32 would buy in 1949. The same thing applies, of course, to family allowances; they have been more than cut in half since they were introduced. One could mention also veterans pensions and the P.F.R.A. payments to our farmers in western Canada which have been cut by more than half. The people who have suffered the most, and I noticed the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris) recognized this in an address he gave on Saturday night, are the people on fixed incomes, the people who in the last 10, 20 or 30 years have purchased life insurance, Canadian bonds or Canadian stocks in order to build up some security for their old age. There has never been in the history of Canada more confiscation of individual savings than under the present government because they have allowed this to happen. If we are going to have a national development plan then we have to see to it that this plan takes into consideration the needs of the regions and, within the regions, the needs of individuals. In this way we would not have poor provinces and rich provinces; we would not have poor people and multi-millionaires from whom, when a

(Mr. Coldwell.)

couple of them die, we can collect a hundred million dollars in death duties.

**Mr. Low:** And then spend it on canned culture.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Never mind what it is being spent for, I am not dealing with that. That is a matter for a separate debate. I am pointing out we can collect that amount from a few people across Canada.

I have mentioned the maritimes, and the South Saskatchewan river project was mentioned. You know, I cannot understand the Gordon report in this respect. This report says it is necessary to change from a wheat economy into a mixed farming economy, and then goes on to advise the government that it should not consider large irrigation projects. This, of course, must refer to a large irrigation project, the South Saskatchewan river project. If you are going to encourage farmers to grow less wheat, then they have to grow something else. So long as those 400,000 acres remain unirrigated they are going to be a wheat proposition. They will raise semi-arid plants of which wheat is our best example. If you carry out the project, then you can grow legumes or perchance you can grow sugar beets and vegetables, establish canneries and so on and reduce wheat products. I am not going into the Gordon report, but I have read it, and I must say I am not going to endorse it by any means because I find a number of similar illogical positions taken in that report. All I can think is that Mr. Gordon was pressed to bring in some sort of a report and he sat down some evenings and dictated it to his stenographer as quickly as he could. This appears to be the case when I read parts of that report.

Then we have such projects that should be undertaken on a national scale. I am firmly of the opinion that we need a national development policy. I do not know what the resources of the north are. I am quite sure if the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra were in his seat this afternoon he would recall that both he and I and the former minister of national defence, Mr. Claxton, were surprised when we were attending a meeting of the foreign policy association in New York in about 1941, I think, to hear Mr. Stefansson, the Arctic explorer, say that the largest reserve of oil in the world was in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Afterwards I asked him if he knew of any geologist who would support that statement, and he named the vice president of Standard Oil of New Jersey. I asked him where I could obtain a copy of what that gentleman said, and he told me from the University of Missouri. I got a copy of