

*Government Organization*

• (8:40 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to prolong the discussion because it is clear the government has made up its mind what to do with the Atlantic Development Board. It has the troops to do what it wants. I hope that in four or five years' time the government of that day is not going to decide the government of this day was as wrong in several respects as the government this day is saying the government was in 1963. The government is now rejecting, pulling out root and branch almost, the very basis of the concept of regional development in the Atlantic provinces which the government launched with great fanfare in 1963 when it established the Atlantic Development Board as an administrative agency. The government of the present day is saying that was a mistake.

The government of that day was also against the concept of growth centres. Indeed, it adopted policies which did not encourage growth centres to grow, but directly worked against growth centres in the Atlantic provinces. I am not sure of the basis of confidence of the minister that he is so right now. I agree with him with regard to the growth centres, but I disagree with regard to the emasculation of the Atlantic Development Board. I find it a little difficult to understand why the government is so confident when the minister concedes that his department has not really worked out its policies. It will take some time to work out these policies. In other words, Mr. Chairman, we are being asked to take this on faith.

I do not want to take up the time of the house because the government has obviously made up its mind. Anything I say or have said obviously is not going to have any effect. At least, my words as to how the Atlantic Development Council should be established have not had any effect.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, it will not be necessary for a government five years hence to decide that the government today was just as wrong as they are saying the government was five years ago. I hope we do not lose four or five years more time in eliminating regional disparity as we apparently have during the past four or five years, not just on the basis of statistics, but on the basis of the judgment of the present government as to the policy decisions made by the government in 1963 and 1964.

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

**Mr. Skoberg:** Mr. Chairman, it appears to me that the amendment being proposed is certainly in order at this particular time. It seems strange indeed that the minister would object to changing the wording of the clause to include this amendment. It is very apparent the Atlantic Development Council will continue to serve a useful purpose, as it has in the past.

I can assure the minister, Mr. Chairman, if the wheat economy of the west remains as it is today, there could well be a need for a prairie development council. There could also be a Pacific development council if the situation warranted it in that particular area.

I do not understand why the minister objects to the adding of this particular amendment to this clause. It is permissive to the extent that the provinces would have to consult with the federal government and the minister. It does not say "that they will establish". It states, "they shall in consultation with the provinces if they so desire". I certainly believe that at this time specific words should be put into this bill which would be of benefit to all concerned.

If the amendment demanded that the government establish other development councils at this time, I would not support it. The amendment does not make any demands upon the government whatsoever. I see no reason why this amendment cannot be approved at this time.

[Translation]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Chairman, as for us, we support the amendment proposed to clause 29, the object of which is to guarantee to the house, by including it in the statute, that there is close co-operation between the federal government and the provinces concerned with regard to the various programs or particular plans which might be implemented to promote the expansion or development of an area.

Our reason for supporting this amendment, which we find most acceptable and logical, is very simple. We already have a constitution, the British North America Act which delineates, very evasively, very vaguely, the powers of the provinces and the federal government. We are aware of the problems the evasiveness in the constitution leads to between the provinces and the federal government; in many cases, the powers are not defined.

The same could be said about many other fields where provincial and federal jurisdictions overlap.