

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 10, 1985

The House met at 11 a.m.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 63—ATLANTIC CANADA

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I put the motion in the name of the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall), may I say that since today is the last day of supply the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply Bill. In view of our practices, may I have the consent of the House to distribute the supply Bill now?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond)** moved:

That this House condemns the Government for its abandonment of the people of Atlantic Canada in its demonstrated lack of political will to provide jobs and other economic opportunities to the people of that region.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to this opposition motion. I wish to preface my remarks by saying that I do so with a degree of sadness, a sadness brought on by the terrible economic plight with which those of us who live in Atlantic Canada are presently confronted. It is a serious situation, serious enough that it has caused various politicians of different political stripes to condemn the national Government for what I believe is an abandonment of the people of Atlantic Canada.

Those of us who are elected to this Chamber bear a heavy responsibility, a responsibility which we must seriously accept. In accepting it seriously we must be able to stand in the Chamber and, I believe, stand for our regions. This is, in fact, the essence of Confederation. Canadians in the Atlantic provinces have grown to expect the best health care possible. They have grown to expect an opportunity to work in their own region. Yes, they believe it is their right under the Constitution and under previous Parliaments to be able to acquire a good education which does not leave them at a disadvantage when compared with other Canadians. To borrow a phrase from Aristotle:

If liberty and equality are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons share in the Government to the utmost.

For all men and women to be truly equal there must be economic and social equality. It is with this particular thought in mind that, some years ago, my Party created the Department of Regional Economic Expansion as a cornerstone of

national public policy to provide opportunities to those of us who live in the Atlantic region. There is no Member on either side of the House who would say that it was implemented without any flaws. There were flaws. However, it was a real attempt to eradicate, if you will, some of the economic disadvantages in the country.

The present policies of this national Government in Ottawa can best be described, as I have said before in the Chamber, as being akin to the trickle-down theory of economics. It is thought that somehow the economies of Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa will create sufficient wealth that it will trickle down to the hinterland of the country. The fact is that that philosophy which pre-dated Mr. Diefenbaker did not work then and it will not work now.

I pose two questions for Hon. Members to consider. First, can and should the federal Government wash its hands of direct responsibility for job creation? Second, is community preservation or place prosperity the sole concern of local and provincial Governments? I think the answers to those two questions are obvious to those who have watched and witnessed the policies of this national Government. It does not believe that as a national Government it has the responsibility to protect community life throughout the country. Nor does the Government believe, because it has not put in place policies with regard to job creation in Atlantic Canada, that it should. In fact, it has been said by one of the centralist Premiers that the job strategy program of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) is fundamentally flawed. The facts which I will share with Hon. Members in a moment will show that to be the case.

My sentiments as expressed here this morning are not of a partisan nature. The sentiments which I express are shared by the Premier of Newfoundland, the Premier of New Brunswick and, yes, not by the Premier of Nova Scotia but by his Minister of Development. Here is what he said a few days ago when addressing a group in Halifax:

Is there anyone up there who will speak for the hinterland . . . who will give so much of a voice to regional problems and legitimate desires as was given in the heat of an election campaign?

That is a quotation from the Hon. Roland Thornhill, Minister of Development for the Province of Nova Scotia. He, too, recognizes that the disparities in the country are not closing. In fact, they are increasing in number and growing in length.

Atlantic Canadians feel adrift. They feel they are left to drift by this Government, which they have catalogued as an elitist and centralist Government which believes its constituency to be that of *The financial Post* 500. The facts bear this out. In Nova Scotia the rate of unemployment is stuck at 13.6 per cent. In New Brunswick 15 per cent of the workforce