

*Newfoundland*

philosophy that tomorrow will look after itself, and an ability to turn their hands to anything from boat building to home construction. Their aptitude as seamen is well known, and their contribution in manpower to this war requires no comment. It would be hard to find a more loyal and delightful people.

I thought that was worth putting on the record this afternoon. The leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) has spoken at length in regard to their war record, and I think we all appreciate what the island did during the war. But Lord Ammon also found that conditions on the island were deplorable. He noted that the people depended for their livelihood mainly on fish, timber and the land, with fishing quite the predominant industry. He said that much of the poverty was due to the long-established methods pursued by the old-style salt and dried cod industry, in which the fishermen went from one debt sheet to another through the operation of what is known as the truck system, now illegal in the United Kingdom and in many other places. On this his comment was interesting, and again I want to quote it:

The uncrowned kings of the settlements are the "planters" or outport merchants, who supply the fishermen, buy their fish and in their own lights act as "guides, philosophers and friends" to the settlements. All of them take heavy risks in advancing money on the probable out-turn of the fishery. If it fails, they fail heavily; if it prospers, they prosper. Many are honest men who have helped hundreds of fishermen through hard winters, others are unscrupulous. All profess to abhor the truck system, but none seems willing to help the fishermen out of the net of debt in which they are constantly enmeshed; and all hold surprising views on the profit an honest trader is permitted to make in a normal year.

He also noted something else; that wherever co-operatives had been established—and the establishment of co-operatives has proceeded apace, very largely under the leadership of the university of St. Francois Xavier in Nova Scotia—or where the fisherfolk received cash for their product, the condition of the whole community had greatly improved.

As I said before, at this stage it is not proper to discuss any of the fifty sections, and I do not propose to do so. That will come when we are discussing the legislation. However, I do want to say something about the necessity of our working together in an effort to develop the material resources of the island for the purpose of raising the standards of living and preventing further exploitation by monopolistic and selfish interests, from which the masses of the people of Newfoundland have suffered from the very beginning. We should consider Newfoundland and Labrador as part of the whole maritime region, which incidentally is a region that cries aloud for a new deal. We believe the federal authority, of course in co-operation with the provinces, of which now Newfound-

land will be one, should institute a policy to encourage the location of industry and investment so that the whole maritime region will be protected from further exploitation by powerful interests with head offices in central Canada or elsewhere.

The other day we heard a great deal about the centralization of government. In my opinion the real danger of the loss of provincial independence, yes, of individual independence, is not in the dominion-provincial tax arrangements made by this parliament with seven of the provinces, but in the concentration of financial and economic power in the hands of a few wealthy individuals or corporations in one or two of the provinces of Canada. Not many months ago the present leader of the opposition, then premier of Ontario, stated that 52 per cent of all industrial and military production during the war came from Ontario. Granted, that was a fine record for the managers and workers in industry in this province, a record of which they can be very proud. But is it not an indication of the tremendous concentration of industry in one province, if the hon. gentleman's figure is right, especially since the bulk of the remainder of Canadian industry, 48 per cent, is concentrated in one other province? It is all very well to argue that Canada has grown strong because the provinces control certain resources which make for national strength; but to say, as the leader of the opposition did on January 28, that—

—the strength of this country has been built upon the combined strength of all the governments . . .

—is unfortunately simply not in accordance with the facts. The fallacy of that statement is that some provinces are weak, not because they signed tax agreements but because of the concentration of industry, wealth and power in a steadily diminishing number of corporations located in a few places, and mainly in two provinces. Yet it should be noted that the masses of the people of Ontario by and large are no better off than the masses of the people in the other provinces of Canada.

We welcome Newfoundland, then, on another count; because it will tend to strengthen the position of the maritime provinces and the other "have not" provinces, and to highlight their problems. Indeed, the addition of another "have not" province will assist all the other provinces similarly situated. If I may once more use the phraseology of the leader of the opposition the other day, this will help provide further checks and balances, not only against over-centralization of power in this parliament but against over-centralization of financial and economic power anywhere in Canada. Indeed, in my