REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT :
WHICH WAY AHEAD?

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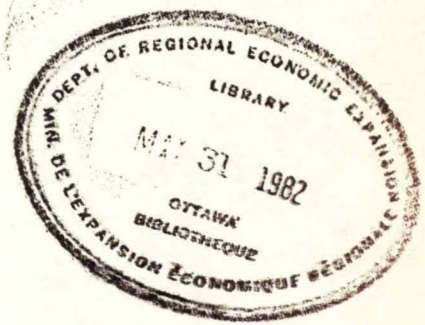# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: WHICH WAY AHEAD?

Prepared for

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# PREFACE

In late August, I was invited by Tim Reid (DREE's ADM, Planning and Coordination) to read and reflect on the following documents: Notes for an Address by the Hon. Pierre DeBané, Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Regional Development, June 3, 1980; Minutes and Proceedings in Evidence of the Standing Committee on Regional Development Respecting DREE's Main Estimates, Wednesday, June 4, 1980; Interview with Pierre DeBané appearing in Le Droit, dated August 20th, 1980; and Proceedings of the DREE Senior Staff Conference, June 17 and 18, 1980.

During our subsequent discussion, I suggested that the basic intentions and aspirations of the Hon. Pierre DeBané for DREE are remarkably congruent with a new and powerful understanding of "development" that is now emerging both within and outside of Canada. Accordingly, I was asked to write "a report on emerging regional development policy issues in the context of trends in North America." This document results from that work.

This paper outlines the emerging understanding of development, explores reasons why it is now emerging, and probes its main implications for regional development within Canada, with particular reference to the federal government and to DREE.

This paper is a discussion piece. The intent is to stimulate and clarify discussion among those who are responsible for determining federal regional development policy and DREE's fundamental direction and character. Accordingly, the style is suggestive, rather than exhaustive. While the basic position, set out below, can be backed by both data and expert opinion, what follows is a personal view, not an academic treatise. It reflects both my best understanding and my deepest commitments. Accordingly, no attempt is made to convince those who do not have some sympathy with the basic intentions for federal regional development, policy and action which are set out in the above-mentioned documents by the present Minister, the Honourable Pierre DeBané.

October, 1980
Ruben F.W. Nelson

# INTRODUCTION

## The Minister's Intentions

It is clear from the documents supplied to me that the Minister (the Hon. Pierre DeBané) has a long-standing and deep commitment to regional development within Canada. Further, he has some definite desires and firm intentions for federal regional development policy and for his Department in relationship to it. The Minister clearly says that:

1.  DREE's orientation and the locus of its activity should be "more and more toward the community level". Henceforth, regional development is to be based upon actions which are rooted in the real needs of real people in real communities.

2.  There is to be more participation at all levels and in all aspects of community and regional development. He acknowledges and under-lines the facts that those who have a legitimate interest in regional development are a much larger set of persons and groups than have been involved with and by DREE up to now and that such persons and groups must be involved, especially but not only at the local level.

3.  Therefore, regional development policy and the Department must be become more sensitive to the particularity not only of each region, but of each community in which it hopes to work. DREE should be rooted in a real knowledge of and respect for the specific areas and peoples which together make up Canada. Diversities are to be honoured; disparities are to be overcome. The two must never again be confused.

4.  Accordingly, DREE's structure must be more "decentralized", so that it too is based in local communities.

5.  The impact of other federal departments on the communities and regions of interest to DREE is seen as both a problem and a possibility. The problem is that DREE is the only federal department which is officially in the regional development game. Therefore,

both DREE and other departments have tended to ignore the fact that many federal departments are <u>de facto</u> agents of federal regional development policy. Accordingly, other departments often act without regard to their impact on regional development--they undo what DREE is trying to do. In addition, DREE's links with and knowledge of other departments is often spotty. The <u>opportunity</u> is to have departments act together in order to pursue a more coherent policy and to achieve more substantial results. This implies that DREE needs to develop a more adequate knowledge of and more substantial relationships with other federal departments and agencies, including those which hitherto have not fallen within DREE's field of view.

## Initial Response

I am left with a sense (although it is not explicit) that the Minister is both moving towards and searching for a concept of regional development which has enough power to fulfill his intentions and to be a reliable guide to further action. Such a concept must be more powerful than that on which federal purpose and policy for regional development and DREE's structure and action have been based up to now.

Clearly the Minister is interested in a concept of development which focusses on real human beings in real situations. His ultimate concern is deeply human--for the human psyche and community well-being--and not merely for economic matters and statistical figures. This is caught inadvertently by Yvan Sinotte of <u>Le Droit</u>, when she noted that he seemed "better fitted to be a minister for matters of the sole and intellect, than one for dealing with figures". Here she captures but fails to grasp the significance of his deepest instincts and interests, or their implications for the future of federal policy or the Department. Rather, she writes from the perspective which is now widely shared inside and outside the government and Department, that the real business of DREE is the business of improving economic indicators.

In contrast, the Minister senses that the real bottom line for DREE is whether human energy is released and whether human health is nurtured at the community level and not whether abstract economic indicators are improved. Given this, it is not surprising that he recognizes that the role, policies, strategies and organization of DREE must come to be seen, and where necessary eventually re-cast, in this light.

In what I have read, it is recognized, although not stated, that in government, "structure is policy". That is, the basic structure and organizational procedures of DREE do in fact determine what DREE is and what it can and cannot do; that it is not possible to get a better performance out of any structure than that range of performances which are inherent within it. In short, if DREE is to have a focus and thrust which is substantially but not totally different than that of her past, the structural and procedural implications must be identified and followed through on.

This, of course, is much more difficult to do than talk about. By now, most who know Ottawa agree that, if nothing else, the '70s showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that good intentions are not enough; that all too often a minister's intentions get lost and submerged in a flurry of policy analysis and research activity, of organizing and re-organizing.

Put plainly, the essential question is: What can now be said and done now which will increase the odds that the present Minister's intentions for regional development policy and for DREE are worked through to the point that the key officials in DREE share his sense of direction and develop the ability to translate in into sure-footed policy, approaches and actions?

Of course, this question is not new. It is the question that always faces any department, with any minister. Accordingly, one is tempted to say that there is nothing new to be said--that all the Minister need do is make his intentions clear to the Department, and the Department will carry them out.

This, at least, is the theory.

But ministers, ex-ministers, senior officials and citizens are all-too-painfully aware that in spite of their best efforts and intentions, all too often this fails to happen. Somehow, it is almost impossible not merely to set but to successfully pursue a new direction.

Further, as those deeply involved in these matters know, most explanations which are commonly offered to account for these failures are essentially misleading and beside the point. Few ministers are deliberately done in by their officials (as opposition MPs tend to believe); few programs fail merely due to lack of funding and staff effort (as directors of those programs tend to believe); few situations have been redeemed merely because the staff has had more "executive development" (as staff trainers claim).

What, then, is the key? What is required, other than the clear and intense sense of intention on the part of a minister, and a clear and intense sense of commitment on the part of his department?

The only answer that I have found to be both reliable and satisfying is that in order to be successful in today's increasingly turbulent and stressful environment, not only persons but institutions require a more powerful and imaginative grasp of the situation in which we find ourselves. Put bluntly, our normal range of view is both too narrow and too shallow. Much that is important to our success is outside our normal fields of view, or on the periphery of our vision. Hence we ignore it. Too often we find ourselves in the situation of the purchasing manager who, enamoured by the economies of scale, purchased a ten-year supply of blotters two years before the ballpoint pen became common.

The most fundamental point of this example is not merely that one should watch out for changing technology, or even that there are limits to the concept of "economies of scale"--both of which are of course true--but that our understanding of our situation determines not only our behaviour but our future. Conversely, the key to a deeply satisfying future is to ensure that our behaviour in the present is appropriate. But this, of course, is only possible if our understanding of our situation is itself adequate. Which brings me back to my main point. In order for the federal government and DREE to successfully act on the Minister's intentions, it needs an understanding of the present situation in

which it finds itself which has enough power to allow it to determine which behaviour patterns are appropriate and which, while familiar, are misleading. Only so will we be able to avoid the subtle but fatal trap to which William Birenbaum points:

> "Must of what passes for future-think is an imagination of what the present would be like if it 'worked right' . . . it is an imagination dominated by now, which aims to imprint the 'best' of now upon the future. The trouble is that the 'best' of now. . .is not very satisfactory."

## A Further Word About Context

We are all used to the fact that in medicine a diagnosis determines prescription (what is to be done). If the diagnosis is faulty, the patient is endangered. In such cases, it does not help--in fact it is beside the point--for the doctor to intensify the prescription and try harder.

The essential elements of this example apply to any human endeavour. The actions we take are based on our sense of what the situation calls for (our prescription) which in turn presupposes the accuracy and adequacy of our grasp of the situation we are in (our diagnosis). In short, we can't solve a problem we don't understand.

At one level, we all understand this. This is not news; it is hardly worth repeating. However, it is instructive to reflect on the fact that almost all the energies of all our institutions--be they governments, churches, corporations or universities--presuppose that our basic definition of the situation which we must address is both adequate and adequately understood by others in the institution. What is more, we tend to assume that our basic institutional forms are also adequate to do what must be done.

Consider that relatively little energy is spent on company time in any institution exploring the possibility that a root cause of our inability to achieve what we intend to achieve is the fact that the situation in which we find ourselves and to which we address ourselves, is not that which we think it is. Almost all our energies are devoted to developing variants of known prescriptions; little energy is devoted to exploring fundamentally alternative diagnoses.

In my judgement, this inability to entertain, let alone to explore, the thought that we are in or are entering a situation which calls for a fundamentally different response, is the root cause of the ineffectiveness of so much that we attempt. As Adelaide says in Guys and Dolls: "The medicine never gets anywhere near where the trouble is." This, in turn, is the root cause of the widespread frustration and malaise in our society--the declining belief in our own potency and effectiveness, which is felt by cabinet ministers, housewives, teachers and prison guards. This widespread dissatisfaction with ourselves infects our society like a low-grade fever: it is not enough to bring us to a halt, but it debilitates. Life does not stop, but nor does it satisfy. All too often we lack the energy to pursue new alternatives.

The essential point is this: If one probes beneath the apparent acceptance and satisfaction of Canadians with their current way of life, one finds a remarkable and profoundly disturbing sense that present conditions are not deeply satisfying. There is evidence that increasing numbers of Canadians are living a life to which they have no commitment, because they do not believe deeply in it. They go along with those in power not because it is in some sense "good", but because it is the only game in town.

The question is rightly asked: What evidence is there that the times call not only for new prescriptions but for new diagnoses of the situation?

For me a variety of evidence comes to mind:

- The sense that is beginning to emerge that any society which is devoted essentially to producing and consuming goods and services can never be deeply satisfying.

- The growing sense of dissatisfaction among Canadians with their lives, a sense that is deeper and longer-lasting than the immediate economic downturn. In short, there is a widespread sense that though we may be "better off" economically than we were ten years ago, we as people are in worse condition.

- The evidence that increasing numbers of Canadians no longer expect the future to be better than the present, or see the present as better than the past. These assumptions have been central to Western

societies for at least 300 years. The loss of faith in the future is too important to ignore.

- William Asher's discovery that the most reliable single indicator of the accuracy of a forecast is the forecaster's grasp of the <u>context</u> within which the trend he is interested in develops, combined with the fact that almost all of our forecasters--economic or otherwise-- are so specialized that it does not occur to them to pay attention to context as if it is central, let alone determinative.

- The judgement of Russell Ackoff that "the present world-wide concern with readjusting social and economic priorities has more to do with our inability to handle what we have failed to take into account than with our inability to handle what we have seen and accounted for."

- The incredible variety of what some have called "development alter- natives" which are springing up throughout North America.

- The growing dissatisfaction not only within Canada but around the world with economic "development" which ignores cultural context.

- The growing discussion, research and literature which indicates that North Americans are in the early stages of what can be called a profound revolution of sensibility: that we are in fact already engaged in a process of weaning ourselves away from definitions of ourselves as "producers and consumers", and are moving towards understandings which are more deeply rooted in the fact and cen- trality of the relationships into which we enter and by which we are constituted.

- The fact that there is now a world wide re-evaluation of "develop- ment"--what it means and what it entails.

Note: Given the nature of this paper, elaborate footnotes are inappropriate. However, a bibliography is attached. It provides references and indicates that the essential positions in this paper reflect a growing world-wide discussion and a growing sub-culture among those who are interested in both the development and the future of this planet.

## Outline of this Paper

What follows is not a prescription for a course of action, much less an action plan. Rather, it should be viewed as an alternative diagnosis of the present situation which, if accepted, points to a different prescription than that which has been implicit in regional development policy and action. The focus is on basic understandings, first principles, and broad implications for action, rather than on specific actions and their firing order.

The first section sketches and explores an understanding of development which is emerging not only within Canada, but in many countries. It is contrasted with that understanding which now dominates our imagination and our institutions--both economic and social.

The second section explores the implications of the emerging understanding of development for federal regional development purpose, policy and activity and for DREE as a department--within itself and in relationship with others.

The final section deals with the question: "What can be done now to pursue these matters further?" Five avenues are set out.

## A Final Word of Caution

If it is the case that we in Western culture are entering into a period of fundamental reassessment, then the inability of most of our institutions as institutions to recognize, face and deal with this fact should not surprise us. We have created institutional forms which demand that our leaders know what they are doing. Accordingly, there is a deep resistance to really taking seriously the proposition that more "getting on with it" is understandable and tragically inadequate. So it is no accident that in virtually all our organizations there are individuals who are aware that much that the organization is doing is counter-productive, if not damaging. It is also no accident that the intellectual and emotional environment within most of our institutions is such that such persons

have learned through bitter experience to bridle their tongues and keep their counsel to themselves. In spite of common rhetoric to the contrary, most of our institutions convey the message that a fundamental re-evaluation of the institution's purposes and directions is not a gift but an attack.

Likewise, there is little tolerance in most of our formal organizations of those who are not yet clear about what they want to say--with those who babble. Almost always, babbling is seen as a sign of incompetence; therefore, it is not to be tolerated. So deep is the presumption that competence and clarity go together, that we do not seriously consider the possibility that those who babble may be working their way through to a new set of insights on which our future depends. We do not consider that an appopriate response is to struggle to hear them rather than to put them down. Unfortunately, in almost all our boardrooms, to babble is to be vulnerable, and to be vulnerable is to invite attack.

If these dynamics are consciously understood, at least we will be in a better position to guard against them and increase the odds of our success.

## Section One

## THE EMERGING UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENT

In the current issue of Scientific American, K. K. S. Dadzie captures our situation by pointing out that "an era of unparalleled economic growth sustained by cheap energy has closed; the era to come is as yet undefined".

For him, the crises and near crises which inflict themselves on Western and Third World countries alike with increasing frequency are evidence that the fundamental form of life which we have developed in the West after the Renaissance, including the Industrial Revolution, can no longer be sustained. He speaks of:

> "the dawning realization by the world community that the old order has begun to work significant deleterious effects on the productive base of the world economy. Erosion of the balance between man and nature by ill-considered uses of technology make it impossible to sustain development on the prevailing terms.

> "In the industrial countries that celebrate themselves as 'bread baskets', imprudent recourse to technological inputs may result in long term diminution and exhaustion of soil fertility. The tropical lands in the course of similar exploitation appear even more vulnerable. There may be no 'limits to growth' in the short run, but there are clear limits to waste."

He points out that:

"The developed market-economy countries are unable to bring the claims of adversary social groups in their societies into a reconciliation that will make it possible to have growth without inflation. The centrally planned economies find it increasingly difficult to sustain increase in the productivity of labor. The developing countries are racked by tensions from the failure of growth or from marginalization of the poor in those few countries that have seen an overall rapid growth. In the economic relations among the developed market economies there is crisis stemming from the dispersion among them of economic power and the breakdown of the financial and trading arrangements by which they had harmonized their competing interests. Between the developed countries and the developing countries relations are in a flux that bespeaks the shift in their relative economic and political power. The drift from crisis to crisis from year to year and month to month threatens to trigger far-reaching political and social dislocations."

In the same issue, Halfdan Mahler picks up this same theme. He points out that:

> "Presumed economic advances can dislocate viable communities, worsen the lot of small farmers, create urban slums and widen income disparities. (The well-meaning 'green revolution' provided dramatic examples of some of these effects.) Development projects unattended by preventive-health measures can increase the incidence of certain diseases. And, as is well known, in many developed countries with advanced health establishments and technology the acute infections have disappeared as major causes of death and illness only to be replaced by chronic mental and physical conditions promoted by stress, pollution, industrial hazards and family disruption."

Mr. Dadzie summarizes our situation in these words: "In the perspective of 1980, the two decades of development may well be characterized as 'decades of disappointment'."

These themes are not new. Twenty years ago the cry of those who saw themselves and were seen by us as "underdeveloped" was for what we had--they wanted "more" and "faster". Now the cry is changing. The concern is still with development, but the image of what that means is irrevocably altered.

There is talk of eco-development. This phrase no longer means economic development, but ecological development: development which is in keeping with the principles of a sustainable ecology. One clue learned from ecology is that diversity brings stability, or as our grandmothers say, we should not put all our eggs in one basket. Another is that yields must be sustainable, and that any economic measure which does not include the total life time of not merely the individuals but the peoples who are undergoing development, is inadequate. The degree to which traditional economics discounts the future is slowly being recognized. Howard Daugherty, Charles Jeanneret-Grosjean and Bob Fletcher provide what is to date the most comprehensive statement on the concept of eco-development:

> "This approach is based on the concepts of self-reliance, self-management, sustained and ecologically sound development, with the objective of the satisfaction of the basic needs of the majority of the population. Such an approach redefines the very purpose of the evolution and development of contemporary human societies by placing into the very centre of the processes of development the improvement of the human being and the satisfaction of the real

needs of the majority of people by their own resources, values and aspirations, and simultaneously promoting a self-sustained basis for security and development in solidarity with future generations.

"Eco-development as such an approach has also been defined by insisting on an ecologically sound environment for development. It is based on these ethical postulates: · real need satisfaction and the ecological soundness of every development and undertaking, by stressing the resourcefulness and inventiveness of the affected human society, which implies a fundamental participatory involvement of the population."

There is talk of appropriate technology. The fundamental sense is not that small is beautiful, but that whatever is done must be "appropriate", it must "fit" with the situation. If nothing else this is a recognition that technology is not information and culture-free, and that if modern Western technology is introduced into traditional societies unthinkingly and without great deliberate consciousness, its effects in total can be devastating—witness Iran. What is more, it is wholly inadquate to talk of these impacts as "side effects". The sense is to honour rather than ignore the context and culture within which "development" occurs.

There is talk of voluntary simplicity—the choice of a way of life which openly and deliberately consumes so little that by most economic indicators those choosing it are "in poverty". To those who make this choice, the lesson is not that they are "poor", but the present arbitrary and abstract economic measures—e.g. "poverty lines"—are so profoundly out of touch with life as lived from the inside that they are not only meaningless but damaging. Their continued use by governments, while well-intended, leads us away from rather than towards deep respect for real persons in real communities.

There is talk of development alternatives. Attempts are being made to both catalogue and understand such alternatives. A Canadian document was prepared in 1979 by Cathy Starrs of the Public Policy Concern for the Department of the Environment. Her sense of the characteristics of the emerging concept of development includes the following:

"    -    respect for human qualities and capacities and for all life-supporting systems on the planet

- acceptance of diversity--the diversity of the human species, of cultures, of different ways of perceiving reality, and of the variety necessary to sustain a healthy society and a healthy environment
- a recognition of and respect for limits, the limits of nature, of social institutions, and of social structures
- a recognition that material prosperity, without attention to these limits, can lead to impoverishment
- a concern for the non-material needs required to support human well-being
- an unwillingness, at the first instance, to accept without question the notion of trade-offs so ingrained in the economic development concept (inflation/employment, economic growth/environmental degradation, producer interests/ consumer concerns . . .)

and, above all,

- the fostering of personal and institutional responsibility and response-ability, of self-reliance and interdependence rather than rugged individualism and independence."

There is talk of <u>development centered on man.</u> Such "development refers to the development of human capacity to meet human needs and to realize full human potentials within a framework of universal human values, the context of the specific situation and environmental limits". This definition is offered by Jan Loubser in his recent report "Development Centred on Man". He identifies the following features of such development:

- wholistic approach--concern with wholeness, integration, inter-dependency, synergy
- human need orientation--focussing on real human needs and aspirations, ranging from basic needs to spiritual needs
- endogeneity--respecting and building on the heritage and tradition of the people to ensure cultural continuity
- participation--required, given the above features
- self-management--necessary, given the above features, and since the capacity for autonomous action is only gained through exercising same
- self-reliance--the ability to initiate action when action is required, given one's own resources
- a community focus--recognizing that individuals wither without community roots
- ecological soundness--respecting all the relationships
- responsibility for future generations--sustainable
- global responsibility--finally, there is only one earth

We are being driven to recognize that, while in one sense all our development activity has been in the name of people and for the sake of human life, the way we have gone about it has at best brought mixed results, and at worst often threatened our ultimate goal, which in the words of Halfdan Mahler is "to improve the well-being of people". In short, it is dawning on us that people and societies may not be the kind of thing we have thought they are, and that therefore to "develop" them we may need to do different things and go about it in different ways than those to which we are accustomed. In Thomas Kuhn's language, we need a new "paradigm" of development.

## Development—As Commonly Understood

It may be useful to recall the common images and understandings of development which flourished in the '60s and which still dominate our imaginations and our institutions. As K.K.S. Dadzie points out:

> "The literature . . . pictured the underdeveloped countries as rich coutries at an earlier stage of development. Authors envisioned development itself as a linear process divided in stages, from 'take-off' to 'high mass consumption', with the necessity for 'catching up' and 'breaking vicious circles' on the way. All countries, including the developed ones, were seen as starting from the same point and facing the same obstacles as they proceeded on the same course. Some would simply move faster than others; the others would no doubt follow, albeit at a distance. The poor countries now starting into a process 'could learn from the mistakes of the rich countries' and could benefit from the continued growth of the rich through such phenomena as 'spillover effects' and 'trickly down' as well as from the policy of economic assistance."

It may be helpful to unpack this development model and explore some of the features which are inherent within it.

First, development is seen essentially as an economic and not a human or social or cultural matter. As in our universities where Political Economy has been split into the science of Economics and the science of Politics, so issues of power, of culture and of the sensibility of a people played no role in economic development.

Consider that we closed the outports of Newfoundland and tried to remove people from Fogo Island, over their cries and protests that their "way of life was being destroyed". Our confidence in the rightness of what we were doing not only led us to ignore their protests, but allowed us to interpret them as the bleatings of a primitive people who did not know what was good for them. We still miss the significance of the fact that Fogo Island has a lower unemployment rate than that of Newfoundland as a whole.

Economic development was pursued in a compartmentalized manner. We were willing to acknowledge that all of the compartments may be important to the life of a people, but only certain compartments were important to economic development. Further, we were convinced that the compartments had nothing to do with each other.

For example, it did not occur to us that development inside or outside of Canada is essentially the same issue—that we do to the Gaspé what we do to Nigeria; that our perception and treatment of the Inuit in the North does not differ fundamentaly from our perception and treatment of any other "backward" and "underdeveloped" people. So, of course, it did not occur to us to compare the experience both in and outside of the country, to check the "successes" of one against the other.

This separation is seen in the fact that there is no lively discussion between DREE and IDRC, or DREE and CIDA. It has not deeply occurred to us that one can learn from the other, or that the understandings of development in and outside of Canada are in the process of being transformed. But we are being pushed to notice the remarkable similarity between the protests of the original inhabitants of the North, those who inhabit Northern Ontario or Newfoundland, and those who live in the Third World. The cry is not merely for more economic development and Western aid, but <u>for a form of development and aid which recognizes and respects the integrity and way of life of those people who are undergoing development.</u> As Noel Starblanket says, "We are not just brown white men."

In like manner, it is a recent discovery that other federal departments and even other governments are in the regional development game, and that if one is

serious about regional development, one cannot pursue it in a compartmentalized manner. Somehow we now recognize this to be true, but the implications for DREE's structure and functioning has not yet hit home. We still respond in the old mode. We dream of having enough coercive power to vet other people's proposals and, where they disagree, to coerce them to behave properly. In short, the basic imagination is still one of "being in control" and "calling the shots". We have not understood a fundamental theme in the protests from the Canadian hinterland or the Third World. Like it or not, they are of one mind: their destiny will not be controlled or determined by others—by those who inhabit the "centres of power".

Given these images, it is not surprising that the focus of development work was on "overcoming disparities" and "building infrastructures". It did not occur to us that this way of approaching regional development only made sense if those who are to be developed are deficient—somehow less than whole, somehow incomplete. The image is remarkably similar to the 19th and early 20th century missionary urge of those who saw themselves as taking "light to darkness"—we who have must share with those who have not.

The interesting thing is that no major church still talks in this language. The image of the deficiency of the "poor" being made up from the bounty of the rich is rejected as itself false and debilitating. The issue is not the need for a crusade of those with light against darkness; the issue is what kind of resources, skills and sensitivity are required in any place in order for the people in that place to live well. The language now is that of "mutuality and learning together". This presupposes a priori respect and no attempt by the "rich" to change and makeover those who receive.

In like manner, it did not occur to us that the older images of development required that those who were "being developed" were largely passive. They were poor and had nothing to contribute. So we saw development was an activity of the rich among the poor. It did not accur to us that development must be an activity in which people themselves engaged for the sake of their own lives.

However, it is interesting to note that the recognition is slowly growing within Canada, not only in relationship to the so-called Third World but in

relationship to our own "poor", that a root cause of their inability to act and cope is their sense that they have nothing to contribute to their own lives--that they must be passive recipients of development from the hands of others-- governments, corporations, "them".

Finally, it is only beginning to dawn on us that the cutting edge of the development discussion is itself only one sign among many that the underlying sensibility which we in the West have nurtured since the Renaissance is no longer adequate for our future.

## Which Way Ahead?

One way to understand what the federal government, the Minister and DREE are up against as they respond to the shifts which are occurring within Canada and the whole Western world is to consider the questions we have typically asked ourselves at different times over the last 30 years and how these have changed. It is important to notice that the way in which we address ourselves to our condition is changing. We are being pushed to deeper levels of conscious awareness. Further, we have been pushed to each new level by the discovery that if we continue to deal with things at the level with which we are familiar, then we will not succeed.

After the Second World War, through the '50s and into the '60s, we were preoccupied with operational matters. We shared a deep sense that we knew what we should do, and a deep desire to "get on with it". There was no question about the shape of the future. The only question was how best to do it. Our focus was programmatic and pragmatic. This was as true of our churches, our service clubs, our universities and corporations, as it was of our governments.

In the '60s we discovered strategy and the need to plan--the need to deal not only with tactics, but with basic approaches to our goals. We learned to do PPBS and we invented strategic planning. However, questions about the basic objectives to be pursued or the directions in which we should be to moving did not yet disturb us. These were taken as given.

The '70s pushed us one level deeper. We discovered that without an explicit and adequate sense of the objectives we should pursue, planning was at best vacuous and at worst dangerous. Powerful and systematic plans in the service of implicit but inappropriate objectives merely meant that we could damage systematically rather than randomly. So we focussed on policy and objectives (MBO) and talked a lot about "measurable results".

What do the '80s hold?

The discovery that our problems are not merely symptoms of inept administration or lack of planning or even unclear objectives. Rather, an increasing number of Canadians, in moments of quiet honesty are discovering that our problems are much more fundamental; namely, we lack a reliable sense of direction and a shared vision of the future we say we serve.

In my view, the '80s will be the decade in which we discover that it is impossible to set worthwhile objectives and pursue them unless we also possess a secure and reliable sense of what is most fundamentally worthwhile and therefore worth doing. In short, a profound sense of intention and a reliable sense of direction cannot be effecitve unless it is grounded in a steadfast character. As is commonly said on the streets, the issue is less "where are we going" than "where are we coming from?" In what are we grounded? What is at the centre of our life? What is the shape of our imagination?

In this light, the cry of Paul Albrecht must be heard. He points out that when one cuts into issues of development, one finds that "our problem is that all rich developed countries, both capitalist or socialist, have been committed to the goal of material progress. There is no ideological system which can be turned to for guidance which has not been corrupted by the expectations of steadily advancing material welfare".

Yet this is still our official position. This, in spite of the fact that increasing numbers of those who live on this planet are coming to the awesome discovery that a billion middle class Chinese who live at current North American standards is not a promise and a dream but a grotesque joke.

Hence the tragedy of attempting to deal with "regional development" according to old images and well-known patterns. Such images can only lead us deeper and deeper into an attempt to save ourselves by more sophisticated tactics. Our situation has been captured by Gyorgy Lukacs when he said (then of Eastern Europe, but equally applicable to us) that:

> "What is happening is grotesque. Lacking a theory, Marxists are condemned to trail along after daily events. Collective movements erupt and are called 'spontaneous'--the movements of students, the young, and so forth--and then the Marxists run to catch up with the events, to understand them after the fact. Their theory is little more than a rationalization for their surprise . . . Under Stalinism, there are no theorists, only tacticians . . . We are still Stalinists. Stalinism is more than the evils of Stalin . . . It is quite simply the substitution of tactics for theory. . . Again and again we are left only with the tactics. We run after the protest movements without understanding them, to say nothing of having foreseen them."

The essential question for DREE is not that of programs, budget, person/ years, strategies or even policy. The essential question is the image and understanding of development which undergirds its work. We are discovering that if the Minister's intentions for DREE are to be realized, a new imagination is required, not merely <u>within</u> but <u>of</u> the Department. The present imagination is exhausted. It no longer gives life. It cannot achieve the desired result. All it can do is preoccupy our time, distract us from the increasingly common sense of dissatisfaction and pain, and allow us to hope that finally it doesn't matter.

Let me summarize the essential thrust of what I have said:

1.  Although it may not be obvious, the Minister's aspirations and intentions for DREE drive it into new conceptual, psychic and cultural space. Therefore, attempts to fulfill the Minister's intentions without coming to grips with their profound implications for regional development and the Department will virtually guarantee that his intentions are essentially frustrated.

2.  The reason this is so is that not only DREE or even the Canadian government but the whole of what we know as the Western world is in fact well into a process of "working through" its deepest understandings of the nature of human life, what is appropriate to pursue, and how best to organize to pursue it. We are in the midst of the most profound transformation of our culture since the Renaissance.

The transformation can be captured in the following way. We are moving, incoherently and inarticulately, from a society which is shaped in terms of the images in the left-hand column towards a society which is shaped in the images found in the right-hand column.

| From | To |
|---|---|
| Static | Dynamic |
| Compartmentalized | Ecological |
| Sovereignty | Relationships |
| Passivity | Participation |
| A narrow, exclusive focus | A profoundly inclusive focus |
| A focus on "things" alone | A focus on "things in context" |
| Linear logic | Logic of networks and relationships |
| Hierarchies | Holograms |
| External domination and control | Internal cultural restraint |
| Knowledge as certain -- obtained at arm's length | Knowledge "for now"-- obtained by tested judgement |

A close examination of our history shows that the roots of this transformation run back to the early 1800's. In short, we are well on the way, even though the implication for our public lives and organizations is only now beginning to emerge.

Section Two

# IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND DREE

If Canadians and others around the world are in fact in process of working through to a new understanding not only of development but of the nature of human beings, human communities and the purpose of life--what can be said about the regional development, federal government and DREE in the '80s?

The essential elements of my own response to this question are found below.

## A Wider and Shifting Context

Clearly, regional development in general and DREE's life and work in particular must be set in as wide and powerful a context as possible. It must include not only Canada but the world. It must include not only what we have been but what we are struggling to become. This implies that the interest of those in the Department--that is, the things to which they attend--and the focus of their activity are very different. In principle, DREE's interest, in principle, must be worldwide. Many networks that are now ignored must be scanned for clues, insights and assistance. The focus of DREE's activity must be on local and regional development.

More specifically, the ability to set regional development and the Department in a wider context will lead to a new sense, which in time will come to be shared both within and outside of the Department, that the times call for a new understanding of "regional development"; that the Department is committed to working its way through to such an understanding; and that this is a task that will take several years, not merely several months. It must be recognized that the Minister and the Department are growing in new sensibility, which cannot be imposed on the Department any more than it can be imposed on a community.

Such an open recognition of the widest context is necessary if those engaged in regional development are to be free enough to learn how to become a different kind of department together. As long as the prime concern is the normal preoccupation with not making mistakes, there is little chance that enough creative learning will go on to enable the Department to successfully transform itself in a way which fulfills the Minister's intentions.

## Purpose

Upon reflection, it is obvious that the underlying purpose of DREE must be the same as the underlying purpose of the whole of the federal government. Presently no statement of underlying purpose is available to guide the Minister, his colleagues or any Departmental official. The required statement will have to do with creating and maintaining a sense of life and the appropriate cultural and institutional forms which enable the Canadian people to own and honour their past and give shape to a sustainable future. At least it will make clear that economic activity is for the sake of human life and not the reverse.

## Role

Given some such common purpose, the role of the Department is "to influence, to encourage, to enable and to support (with both human and financial resources) appropriate processes of local and regional development".

In short, DREE is not essentially in the economic program delivery business. It is not a taker of resources to those who have no resources. It does not fundamentally overcome disparities. Rather, it works with those who seek to develop their area or region in such a way that they may do so successfully and appropriately. In the future DREE expertize will not be program delivery, but a capacity to understand the nature of development so powerfully that it is able to recognize and assist local people to utilize the resources which are necessary to effect local and regional development.

To the extent that it does not now reflect this sense or competence, DREE needs to be redesigned.

## Objective

DREE's objective is to achieve local and regional development which is appropriate to each particular place in Canada. Such development is achieved when the persons who live in each place see themselves to be "living well".

The fact that there is no standard definition of "living well", either in the whole country or through the whole of our history is a reason for not developing a standard definition of what living well entails. One can talk of the rhythms of such a life, its expectations and relationships, but not of the possessions one would own.

## Key Strategic Considerations

1. First, it must be recognized that DREE is in the business of influence and not power. In part this reflects the present reality of Ottawa—that DREE does not have enough clout to win most power confrontations with other departments; that it will never gain such power. More fundamentally, the focus on influence recognizes that the essential currency of this town is psychic energy and conceptual power. These more than anything else determine the essential pathways and directions that governments and departments take. Accordingly, DREE's business is influencing direction and encouraging and nurturing others in their capabilities to both see the directions in which we should move and to move in them. By definition, this is a game of influence and not coercive power.

2. Strangely enough, only deeply secure, profoundly centred human beings can be "powerful" enough to importantly influence others. That is, DREE needs to develop its power and authority, but it will be the power and authority of those who understand the present and can move sure-footedly towards the future—those who are not fragmented and scattered by the increasing

pressures and noise in our society. Such power, of course, is deeply personal. It is not merely functional. It is not the result of our normal staff training or university programs. This, of course, speaks volumes about present P.S.C. selection criteria for senior appointments.

3. One key to personal power is a powerful conceptual capacity--a capacity to range widely over all that is happening and recognize the underlying patterns and directions. Such conceptual power is more than the theoretical power of most academics, and is able to overcome the narrow limits of present academic disciplines. The point is that in the midst of a society that is increasingly torn, fragmented and incoherent, there is no possibility of focussed and sustained action to which one can make an open and deliberate personal commitment unless those who "lead" have a profound understanding of the times and the tasks to which we are called.

4. An appropriate organizational form must be developed. It is not enough to develop a decentralized as opposed to a centralized form of organize, for both of these choices imply the linear logic and hierarchical relationships of the past which are no longer appropriate. We need organizations which have more to do with holograms than hierarchies; organizations which are shaped as networks rather than as linear logic chains. At this point, there are few people in Canada who can even pursue the outlines of such an organization in their imagination, let alone actually create one. This is part of the challenge that lies ahead.

The point is that the images of "centre/periphery", "heartland/hinterland", "head office/regional office/local office", are no longer appropriate. Rather, DREE must be fully present in every locality. All of the capabilities of the whole organization must be present everywhere, as is the case in a hologram. Few have understood the fact that present developments in electronic technology and the merging of telephones, data processing, information processing and word processing make such an organization possible on a wide scale for the first time in human history. Hardware is not the issue. Rather, the issue is lack of a powerful imagination to understand and grasp the opportunities which face as us.

5.  If DREE is to function in a holographic manner, it is essential that there be deep agreement throughout the Department on the underlying sense that directs and drives the Department. In the future, organizations will be much more communities than independent functional units that happen to be knit together by senior management. As such they will bear the mark of communities—namely, a shared sensibility as to what fundamentally they are about—a sensibility which is so deep and powerful that they can rely on it to govern their action. Given present realities and present expectations, this is almost impossible. Further, it is instructive that most organizations, inside or outside of government, do not even make the attempt to develop a shared sensibility among their people. Rather, we act out the common sense of the culture: that a shared sensibility may be desirable, but is optional. We have not recognized its hard, pragmatic, practical worth.

6.  In the future, DREE will have an appropriate knowledge base which is wider and more powerful than that which is now common to it. It will include an understanding of at least the following elements:

    -   the nature of development processes which lead to human and community well-being
    -   knowledge of other departments and agencies of the federal and provincial governments, including those that now fall outside DREE's vision, e.g. IDRC and CIDA. Not only data of programs, but knowledge of their sense and sensibility will be included.
    -   knowledge of Canadian organizations and persons who are struggling towards and committed to an alternative understanding of "development" and of the international networks which feed them
    -   knowledge of the particularity and history of those Canadian communities and regions within which DREE works
    -   knowledge of the difference between community based development and economic development as it is now commonly understood

    Further, it will be recognized that in some ways it is misleading to talk of a knowledge base, for this sounds like a library, as if knowledge can exist apart from persons, apart from use. Rather, the image will be a living network.

## Section Three

## WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The essential first step for those who are responsible for guiding and managing the Department is to work through their own sense of these things to the point that they are clear about what it is they will do and what they will not do; what they will tolerate and what they will not tolerate; what they will deal with and what they will leave alone. The senior persons in the Department must act from a reasonably common and adequate sense of the essential dynamics of the next five years.

It is important to reflect on the fact that one of the reasons we shy away from underlying and profound discussions and actions is precisely because they touch us so deeply and are so important. Best these things are left alone if they are not done well. Neither the country nor those who work in the Department can stand yet another call to arms and another appeal for greater commitment and expenditure of energy which is not grounded in a profound understanding of the situation and how to deal with it. Success in these matters is in direct relationship to the degree to which the underlying questions which face DREE are not only opened up but and faced and engaged with.

Having said this, however, there are a number of specific steps which the Department could undertake. None are so obviously threatening and earth-shattering that they would be resisted in and of themselves. Yet they are steps which are consistent with the thrust of this paper.

1. Act to call into being a network/organization which is made up of those who are committed to exploring, understanding and acting on the image of development which is now emerging. This act would build a constituency for the Department which would be so strong that central agencies and others would think twice before tinkering with it. (Presently I see no visible constituency to support DREE, other than those firms that feed on its programs.) This would assist in building a knowledge base not only

within but outside of the Department. More fundamentally, it would work on altering the environment within which DREE works—that is, it would help call into being an environment within which the kind of department DREE should be would be credible. Unfortunately, in the present environment such a department would be incredible to a large number of persons and firms.

The actual way this could be done needs to be worked out with great care. But, for example, it could arise out of a process of conversations and seminars on "Local Development: New Visions and New Approaches". Alternatively, a review of the Department's relationships with voluntary organizations and local groups could provide the necessary first exploratory step.

2.   Work to develop the conceptual base which is necessary if DREE is to achieve the degree of clarity and potency which the future requires. One might begin in gentle ways by developing papers which pursue and follow up in a more disciplined way the themes of this document. A process of conversations with and among the Minister and senior officials might also be appropriate.

I would caution against merely providing additional funding for in-house policy groups. By their very nature and position, such groups are not able to probe the issues with the necessary depth and freedom. The experience of the Advanced Concepts Centre in the Department of the Environment in the mid-70s is instructive here, as is the actual outcome of most departmental policy shops.

3.   Review Departmental organization, especially its roots in, knowledge of, sensitivity to and support of local activity in local communities. Such a review would include the capability of the Department to use electronic communications and to function as a network.

4.   Develop a data base of the activities and impacts of other federal and provincial departments which impact regional development. This initiative should identify those people within the federal public service who are

essentially sympathetic with the directions in which DREE wishes to move, so that an external network of information and support is developed. One of the things that continues to surprise me as an outsider to the public service is how well-developed the networks are which ensure that little changes in the public service, and how few of the people who have a deep sense of the need for change are in touch with each other in a sustained way.

5.    Eventually, the Department will have to consider what processes will be used to work through these things within the Department--processes which will explore these issues and develop a shared sensibility. Again, care must be used. Experience with most organizational development, management development and staff training is largely beside the point. These approaches almost always reflect rather than break with the now-taken-for-granted sensibility of the culture.

In all of this, the deepest commitments of the Minister are crucial. At the least, it is clear that in these things "one cannot be more royalist than the king". No department can become more than its Minister will allow. Happily, this is not a problem in DREE's case. The Minister's intentions seem clear. The question is whether they will be grasped, explored, understood and acted upon.

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