

"REGIONAL ECONOMIC POLICIES IN CANADA": A REPLY

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Mr. Walton's comment on my paper, "Regional Economic Policies in Canada", requires a response on two levels. I dislike its tone - particularly, Mr. Walton's gratuitous references to my work as a university teacher, about which he knows nothing. His remarks concerning the scope and level of the paper are unwarranted.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Walton's direct comments on my paper boil down to four criticisms.

1. He objects to the view that Canada has always been preoccupied with regional development problems.
2. He says I omitted important influences on the creation of regional development policies in Canada.
3. He accuses me of "excessive reliance" on the Economic Council's 1977 report, Living Together.
4. He suggests that I misunderstood or misstated "various reports and studies".

Mr. Walton's first criticism is based on a misreading of my opening sentence, "Federal countries such as Canada are naturally preoccupied with regional development." I made only a general statement, particularly reflecting on the recent period. But, I must disagree with Mr. Walton's underlying view that regional economic affairs have not preoccupied Canada since Confederation, and before. Whatever the earlier results of this interest, it is simply wrong to argue that it has not existed.

Secondly, Mr. Walton feels that I neglected several Maritime precursors to the Rowell-Sirois Commission Report, the 1957 Gordon Commission, and various studies by Atlantic scholars. Given the limitations of space and the requested mid-sixties to mid-seventies focus of the paper, I could not refer to these. A full study of the history of the emergence of regional economic policies in Canada would, of course, include a large number of sources from Atlantic Canada (and other parts of the country), but I made not pretense to such scope.

Thirdly, the example cited by Mr. Walton of my "excessive reliance" on Living Together is carefully qualified in the paper ("According to the research presented . . ."). Mr. Walton asserts that regional labour productivity differences are not mostly related to differences in output per worker, but he refuses to provide any information about his own contribution to the debate on the causes of these differences.

Mr. Walton's fourth and most mysterious criticism is that my work is "superficial, shoddy, and largely bereft of analysis." If this is true, then I must have misunderstood or misstated the sources cited in

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<sup>1</sup>The paper was invited for a panel reviewing recent regional development policy experience in four countries (Australia, Canada, Italy, United States). Given a time limit and the presence of large numbers of non-Canadians, the paper had to be relatively short and had to provide some political and economic context for the review.

the paper, yet Mr. Walton offers no specific examples of alleged errors in fact or interpretation.

Mr. Walton's "Comment" itself contains two factual errors. I do not "argue for a North Atlantic Free Trade Area". I refer to a study which used such an arrangement as the base against which to estimate the cost of the Canadian tariff to British Columbia. Also, I am not the Munro who was a co-author of that study.

I am not sure, exactly, what formed Mr. Walton's agenda when he wrote his comment on my paper. Clearly, one matter that should concern him in the near future is writing his own survey of recent Canadian regional economic policy, one that should satisfy him more than mine has.