

*Regional Development Incentives Act*

entire population of Mattawa, consisting of about 3,000 people, and all the people who live on small farms near the town, will be in great jeopardy if this industry disappears. The three branches of this furniture business constitute the only industry operating in that section of the upper Ottawa Valley. It is for this reason that I am supporting the bill before us and asking that this area be taken, not just into serious consideration but realistic consideration when the time comes for renewal of the program in 1976.

● (1440)

I could list other statistics for the county of Renfrew and city of Pembroke but I shall not do so at this time because other members want to speak on this bill. However, I sincerely request that the area I have mentioned be reinstated for another 12 months. At the present time, the city of Pembroke and the county of Renfrew are negotiating with the provincial government of Ontario for a General Development Agreement. This has been going on for months but the agreement has not been signed. I should amend that by saying subagreement, because the general agreement covers the entire province.

I know that many members of this House look upon the province of Ontario as the rich brother of this nation. That may be true for certain areas of the province, but the Ottawa Valley, on both sides of the river, is quite often compared with the conditions existing in the maritime provinces. In fact, many members of the Canadian armed forces who retire from the service at CFB Petawawa remain in the Ottawa Valley because it is so similar to their home province in the maritimes. There is a very close relationship here.

While there are rapid growth areas in certain parts of Ontario, many areas of this province are very similar to the slow growth regions of Canada. Because they are slow growth regions, many municipalities, counties and districts cannot afford the water and sewage services about which the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) just spoke. Therefore, they do not have the up to date industrial parks, with all the facilities, to offer incoming industries in the same way as the rapid growth areas of Ontario.

The local municipalities make suggestions as to what they feel should be included in the General Development subagreements which is a federal-provincial program. Those GDA subagreements should include water and sewage services in order to upgrade industrial parks. However, even if an area 250 or 350 miles from a large urban area has an up to date industrial park, industry still locates in the large centres of this country. What we need in rural Ontario, and in the small municipalities across this province which do not have the same benefits as the large urban areas because the latter have a greater municipal tax base, is an incentive program built into the GDA program. This is necessary if it is going to work effectively and efficiently for those areas.

The GDA subagreements should cut away some of the red tape. Unfortunately, this is common with many federal-provincial agreements. It is very important that we have a good working relationship among officials at the federal and provincial levels. It is important that there be close conversations between the federal and provincial govern-

[Mr. Hopkins.]

ments on a very sincere basis. We should not stall in those areas classified as slow growth. There should be sewage and water facilities in industrial park areas. Assistance should be given to municipalities so that they can provide better sewage disposal plants, upgraded water facilities, sewer lines, water lines, and so on. Much of this has already been done by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and for that I compliment that Crown corporation: they have done a tremendous job at that level.

In order to provide for the growth that will take place as a result of the development of upgraded industrial parks, we must also provide facilities for those who will be moving into these areas. The increased population will increase the necessity for facilities. This will drain off some of the large populations needlessly concentrated in certain areas of Canada, creating added expense by more expensive housing, for example.

Many people have moved from rural areas into large urban areas. Others who have lived in urban areas all their lives see a certain value to the small town or small city way of life. It offers them a rural landscape, natureland in the shield area, as it is known in eastern Ontario. Not only does this increase the quality of life for people, but through this legislation we are discussing, it provides for their livelihood. It will slow the growth in the large urban centres of Ontario which, if allowed to grow at the present rate, would cost this country a fortune. Do we in Canada want a New York City, Chicago or Detroit?

Under the legislation that we are discussing, and under the General Development subagreements at the federal-provincial level, there should be programs to develop small communities across Canada and to provide for a better quality of life for our people.

● (1450)

I want to say that the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Lessard), who by the way is my seatmate, certainly has my total support in his endeavours as far as the Department of Regional Economic Expansion is concerned. I hope these programs will continue to go forward in the years to come so that we do not get into the problems I discussed a few minutes ago.

In closing, I should like to reiterate the request I put on record earlier with regard to a 12-month extension of the special area in Renfrew county. I should like to see more rapid progress in signing the sub-CDA agreement between the two senior levels of government concerning my area of the Ottawa Valley. I should like to say of the Ottawa Valley in general that the hon. member for Pontiac (Mr. Lefebvre) who has worked very closely with me over the years—and we have an excellent rapport—faces many of the same problems and we both support the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to the hilt. Once again I pay tribute to the people of that department regardless of the criticism which has been thrust at them from time to time.

I should also like to add that I am prepared at any time to put the plus factors together and stack them up against the minus factors as a whole in the Ottawa Valley as far as the effect the Department of Regional Economic Expansion has had on our locale.