

Policy Statement on National Resources

If the Canadian people could have afforded to wait another generation that idea might have crystallized and we might have seen in the next generation the initiative that this government is now taking to deal with this problem.

Mr. Dinsdale: Tell us about that initiative.

Mr. Cashin: The first and most important initiative is the provision under the FRED legislation of a \$300 million fund for rural development. The second is the recognition, hitherto ignored, of the need for co-operation and planning on a regional level involving the federal government and the provincial governments and, as important, the co-ordination of effort within these levels of government in order to achieve the ultimate objectives of the FRED program.

I shall read the objectives of that program because the hon. member opposite just asked me to tell him about the initiatives of this government. The hon. gentleman is like a horse. You can lead him to water but you cannot make him drink.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The wrong end.

Mr. Cashin: Perhaps, as the hon. member has suggested, the hon. member for Brandon-Souris has been taken by the wrong end.

Mr. Dinsdale: That is a typical remark of the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Macdonald).

Mr. Cashin: However, Mr. Speaker, hon. gentlemen opposite made one thing clear, namely, that they dismissed completely and paid no attention at all to some of the problems that have arisen in this field. I suggest this would have been a much better debate had they taken issue with the government on specific programs and policies which we have introduced. In that way they could have put forward constructive criticism. But it seems commonplace among members of the opposition to ask generalized questions such as, what are you going to do, when it is not their responsibility. During the course of this debate hon. gentlemen opposite have not offered anything that could approach constructive advice.

The FRED legislation provides the main basis for joint federal-provincial comprehensive development planning in alleged underdeveloped rural regions. It provides that areas, selected jointly by the federal and provincial governments, which are subject to widespread low income, possess major adjustment problems and yet have some recognized

[Mr. Cashin.]

development potential, are eligible for special assistance. Under the terms of this act and under the federal-provincial rural development agreements the program, for the benefit of hon. gentlemen opposite, involves the following: First, physical, economic and social studies and investigations of all sectors of the region to determine its developmental problems and potentials; second, the participation of local people through the establishment of rural development committees or similar bodies and, finally, the preparation of comprehensive development plans incorporating a broad range of projects whose purpose is to increase income and employment opportunities and to raise standards of living.

• (5:50 p.m.)

The hon. gentleman has asked for an example. He has only to go to his own province of Manitoba to get an example of the working of this program, and I refer of course to the recently signed agreement.

Mr. Schreyer: Would the hon. member permit a question? Does he mean to say that the ARDA or P.F.R.A. programs in Manitoba have been transferred into actual, tangible works?

Mr. Cashin: I did not say they have been transferred into tangible works. Certain aspects of this program have only recently come to fruition. Certainly I make no suggestion that a miracle is involved. I leave such pie-in-the-sky sentiment to my hon. friend opposite.

Another good example is the northeast agreement in the province of New Brunswick. If there is any question as to how well this has been received by the people of New Brunswick we have only to reflect a little on the results of yesterday's election in that province. It is quite clear to me, if one looks at the results of that election, that the people of New Brunswick were satisfied with the initiative which has been taken jointly by the federal and provincial governments, notwithstanding the combination of the Van Horne-Stanfield axis and their attempts to abort this program and progress in that province. Other provinces, such as Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, are now preparing similar programs. These are comprehensive programs which deal with the development of natural and human resources in these areas.

I suggest to hon. members opposite that this is a good example of federal initiative in this field. I am not suggesting that because the federal government has brought in a