

Mr. Perrault: Would the hon. member permit one question?

Mr. Thomson: Yes.

Mr. Perrault: Has the hon. member been out to beautiful British Columbia?

Mr. Thomson: Yes, several times.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thomson: Furthermore, I hope to go again. There is quite a bit of B.C. that I have not yet seen, but what I have seen as a tourist I would recommend to anyone in the city of Ottawa, in eastern Canada or wherever it may be. I would also recommend the virtues of the Prairie provinces which are distinctly different from those of this area. As I say, I think the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce should do a little more to promote tourism in Canada. May I make just a few comments about the responsibility of the Prairie governments in this regard. Such bodies as boards of trade and the tourist operators in the four western provinces have not done as much to promote tourism as they could. After all, why should the federal government be solely responsible for tourist promotion when, hopefully, these people themselves stand to gain from such promotion?

I have also been astounded at the ease with which some of the people who work in the House of Commons make the decision to go to Europe on holiday, or fly to Spain. Secretaries who work in this House, and wives of members go; and, if they are not too busy, even members occasionally go. Clerks, nurses, civil servants and all kinds of people in Ottawa fly on holiday to Europe. I think a great many of them could afford to see Canada first.

I should just like to make one last point. I see that the minister in charge of northern affairs is in the House. I recommend to him that in the interest of the people in the Yukon and Northwest Territories he promote tourism in the north. I have travelled in some northern areas and have been quite fascinated by some of the things I have seen there. It may be that in some of these areas a more hardy type of tourist is called for; but those who have never seen the north will find it very interesting, with its icebergs, polar bears, seals on ice and some 10,000 lakes. I do not think most of us realize how much there is to see.

I suggest it is high time we explored this idea. By doing so, hopefully we might solve the problems of some of those who live in outlying areas who do not benefit from employment or industry yet need the means to make a living. They could at least make some sort of living out of a tourist industry.

Mr. Walker: May I put a question to the hon. member?

Mr. Thomson: Yes.

Mr. Walker: Does the hon. member feel it would be helpful, in order to achieve some of the objectives to

Regional Development Incentives Act

which he has referred today, if a publicly-owned railway had special rates for Canadians who travelled at least to provinces beyond their own in order to see Canada?

Mr. Thomson: I would not like to say at this point. But whether it be a publicly-owned railroad, a privately-owned railroad, Air Canada, CP Air, or what-have-you, there should be more tourist promotion in Canada and the people of Canada should be told of the things to be seen and enjoyed in this country. There is much to be seen in Canada. I thank the hon. member for his suggestion.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I should like to add a few words to the debate on this bill dealing with regional development incentives. My area is vitally involved with the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and already in my constituency two or three incentive grants have been made. Having listened to the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley (Mr. Thomson) I thought we were debating the estimates of the department of tourism until I realized there is no such department in the federal government. However, let me tell him that I hope he will not sell the province of Saskatchewan short, because it is a great province. I lived there for a few years. I think everyone should see the Prairies and the western provinces, especially at harvest time when that part of the country is unsurpassed for beauty; and the people there make it that much better.

The special incentives in this bill are a temporary measure and affect the southwestern part of the province of Quebec and the southeastern part of Ontario. The incentives in these areas are at a lower level than those in the rest of the country, which I think is in keeping with the need to bring industry into this area. Industry tends to establish itself in the Montreal area and along the St. Lawrence because the sales potential there is large. One important feature of this legislation is that the department is developing a certain flexibility. It is bringing in legislation as needed and the legislation the department does have on the books is becoming more flexible. The criticism we always hear in northern Ontario when grants under the Regional Development Incentives Act are compared with those under the Ontario Development Corporation is that incentives are available primarily to manufacturing industries and not to processing and other industries such as mining and tourism.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Of course, this bill does not provide for incentives or assistance to the mining industry but it does provide for a broadened system of loan guarantees which would be available to projects such as convention centres, hospitals, office buildings, company headquarters and shopping facilities. In northern Ontario we will consider this a benefit because we have some of the best tourist areas in the country and the development of facilities to accommodate tourists is sadly lacking but highly desirable.

Where there is a narrow economic base of industry concentrated around the products of mining and forestry, a broadened tourist industry is highly desirable. The bill