

Industry, Science and Technology

Perhaps the most important point to stress is that any industrial policy which is going to make sense for Canada has to be one which stresses regional fairness. Personally, I must talk about my visit to Cape Breton Island where I saw the tremendous differences in opportunities that exist for people in Cape Breton as compared with those for people in Ontario. It is simply not right. It should not be possible in a country like ours to have this kind of disparity going on generation after generation, so that there are people in Cape Breton who survive perhaps six or eight to a family on the single old age pension cheque of one member of the family who is old enough to receive that pension. It is not right.

It is not right either that on Vancouver Island we have rates of unemployment that are at the immense levels they are in parts of the island. The damage which has resulted from the lack of a serious strategy in the forestry sector is evident on Vancouver Island. The Government has to respond to that.

I could also speak personally about canvassing in Edmonton, the Acting Speaker's home area, and finding people as I went from door to door who had been out of work for months because of the collapse of job opportunities in that city. I could also talk personally about the tremendous disparity that one finds even in the richest part of Newfoundland, in St. John's itself. The difference between life in St. John's for a person graduating or leaving high school and the opportunities that are available to the same person in the City of Toronto are differences which simply should not exist in a humanitarian and fair country.

[Translation]

I can say the same thing about the Province of Québec where, in many communities, the unemployment rate is so high that young people cannot find jobs. That situation is just as unacceptable in the rest of the country. We cannot have a united country if young men and women are discriminated against and if people living in Québec do not enjoy the same opportunities as residents of Ontario. It is unfair!

• (1310)

[English]

I think the worst thing about this Bill, and the reason we will be opposing it, is that this Bill is part of an ongoing attack with respect to regional development in this country. We already have a freeze with respect to renegotiation of economic and regional development agreements with the provinces throughout this country. Seven provinces and two territories are affected. There are 44 sub-agreements to a total of \$918.3 million which has lost its reality as of March 31 and which this Government is not carrying forward to renegotiation at this stage.

We also have stories now circulating with comments coming from the officials within the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, as it still is, saying that there will be more cuts and that these cuts are going to affect the hard-hit regions of this country, regions that were promised prosperity, thanks to free trade. They are now being given the reality of cut-backs, more unemployment, more broken promises as a consequence of what has taken place on the part of the Government. But most of all what we have in this Bill is one more step with respect to the dismantling of any over-all responsibility in this country for regional development. In that sense, this Bill is one more backward step for regional fairness in Canada.

All of this breaks the promise that was made last October in Saint John by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who said, "The federal Government has a responsibility for regional development in the interest of national unity as well as in the interest of fairness. We cannot have two Canadas in the economic sense any more than in the constitutional sense".

This Department used to be responsible for all co-ordination. That is destroyed by this Bill. It is not part of this Bill. We will therefore fight this Bill, and we will do so at this stage by moving an amendment. I move, seconded by the Member for Mission—Coquitlam (Ms. Langan):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-3 because it fails to clearly define federal Government responsibility for regional development and specifically fails to reflect the requirement of s. 36 (1)(b) of the Constitution Act, 1982 that Parliament is committed to "furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities"."

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!