

*Regional Development Incentives Act*

should have made a special provision for Montreal and used other legislation to assist in carrying out a temporary program. I asked the minister, if he wanted to amend the act, why did he not amend it substantially so that areas which could not at present avail themselves of its provision could do so. He admitted they were conducting an investigation in one province because they did not think it was working out, and this is the sort of thing I was hoping would be done. I do not think it is consistent to designate an area that has had a temporary setback but not to designate, say, Vancouver.

• (9:10 p.m.)

This is all I really want to say. I feel that the members of the House of Commons who want to make constructive suggestions with regard to legislation passing through this House have been placed in an awful predicament this evening, to the extent that I am unable to continue to offer detailed proposals to reinforce our arguments without feeling that I am out of order in doing so. We have not been given the chance to debate this matter in detail, and it is an issue that is fundamental and at the very root of regional development.

A lot of people are unhappy about the fact that there is in this country an increasing tendency toward government by ministerial decree. We used to take great exception to legislation by order in council. We are now getting similar powers placed in the hands of the minister. I do not distrust this minister, but perhaps one of these years he may not be in the position he is in now. This is why I think we should be given the opportunity to examine this legislation in some detail. Once the bill is passed and the legislation is in the minister's department, tied all neatly and tidily, all businesses in Canada, except perhaps for the corner store, are going to be at the mercy of the minister when it comes to questions of finance. As one hon. member said, to all intents and purposes the minister is going to be czar of economic development in this country, and perhaps this is true.

The arguments that we have presented are legitimate ones. They have been based on research done by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, especially Dr. Brewis. Contributions have been made by many premiers of the provinces, as well as one of the newly appointed finance ministers in the Atlantic provinces. Yet, this bill is being squeezed through. Hon. members are now allowing the bill to pass because they do not feel like pushing on any further.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: On division.

**Mr. McGrath:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think in all fairness the House would expect the minister to

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

make some statement before the House votes on third reading. There has been a very earnest and serious debate. We have had a very exhaustive study of the bill in committee. The minister has heard arguments tonight from opposition members. Under normal circumstances, we would expect the minister to make some reply to the views put forward by hon. members.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order. Before allowing the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion to make comments, if he wishes to, there should still be unanimous consent—

[English]

According to the rules of the House, after the minister moves the motion for third reading he is entitled to passage of the bill.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the House would be disposed to give unanimous consent to hearing the minister wish us a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, if nothing else.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** Mr. Speaker, I think this would result in another debate which I think is not in the best interests of this House.

[English]

**Mr. Baldwin:** We will take that as read.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Does the House agree that the question be taken as read?

**Mr. Baldwin:** I meant the minister's speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, the bill we have just passed will be going to the other place.

**Mr. Lewis:** Are there enough of them still awake?

**Mr. MacEachen:** I gather there will be a wait of an hour or so before we can reassemble for royal assent, so I am wondering whether, in accordance with previous discussions, we might clear up two other items before rising until the bell summons us for royal assent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

**Mr. MacEachen:** I would call item No. 39.