

Regional Development

it. But I do not feel that the federal government, through the medium of federal plans, should be responsible for redirecting an industry from one area of the country to another. In this case, the consequences have been particularly difficult for us.

As you are no doubt aware, Mr. Speaker, my remarks have been almost out of order because the hon. member's notice of motion refers particularly to the counties of Renfrew and Lanark. I nevertheless felt that the subject ought to be discussed because the people of my riding told me they did not see why they should be left out when other parts of Central Ontario are included in the plan. They felt particularly that the counties of Lanark and Renfrew had benefitted because Liberal members represent them in this House. Of course, I was able to assure my people that politics did not enter into the matter to that extent because all of us, no matter on which side of the House we sit, have been clobbered and that the minister will continue clobbering us because he will not change his attitude. At least the people of my constituency feel that others are keeping them company in their misery.

I will conclude my remarks by urging the minister, who is not here, to read the official record and reconsider his decision of not changing in any way for three years the lines he has drawn. If he does change them, I do not think he will be in as much trouble as he imagines. I do not think, just because one region of the country puts forward a good case for assistance and another region does not, that anyone will howl. Many regions will be disappointed, as we are now disappointed. Nevertheless, I think the minister should give Lanark and Renfrew a chance to prove their case and also give Parry Sound and the Muskoka area generally a chance to prove their case.

An hon. Member: And Cornwall.

Mr. Aiken: Cornwall should have a chance to prove its case. All the figures should be looked at, because only in that way can the Department of Regional Economic Expansion be made to function properly. I will put my region's case alongside any other region's, and argue the matter. Otherwise, if we are not allowed to do that, the prospects for the central Ontario region will be bleak indeed for the next three years. I hope that the minister, his parliamentary secretary or someone in the department will read my remarks as reported in *Hansard* and pay some attention to them.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew North): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity of speaking on this notice of motion. I congratulate the hon. member for Lanark and Renfrew (Mr. McBride) for bringing this matter before the House.

Some time ago I read in a book, the title of which I do not remember, a sentence that goes something like this: "Something that we must always remember is that our nation's future prospects are far greater than its problems." Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that if this nation's prospects are greater than the problems we face in the Upper Ottawa Valley, its prospects are golden indeed because we shall enter a golden age.

• (5:30 p.m.)

Several years ago I began working as a rural school teacher in Renfrew county. I know this area from one end to the other. When I began teaching I taught children whose parents were not earning more than \$1,000 a year. Today there are many people in Renfrew County who are not earning more than \$1,500 annually. I obtained some pertinent statistics from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics a short time ago. They showed that the town of Pembroke, which is the county seat, had the third lowest average weekly income in 1968 of any community in Canada west of the New Brunswick border. At the same time, municipal taxes in Pembroke were the third highest in the province of Ontario; only in the cities of Cornwall and St. Thomas were taxes higher. It is worth while making the comparison here: the third lowest income in Canada west of New Brunswick and the third highest tax rate in Ontario. It is no wonder we in the Upper Ottawa Valley feel frustrated and somewhat discouraged. I have another statistic which will strengthen my case. The DBS figures show that Pembroke is the only town in this whole area of central Canada whose population declined between 1961 and 1966; and I am speaking of the county seat of the county of Renfrew.

A short time ago one of the leaders of a municipality in this area came to see me and we had a meeting with officials of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. He told us what was the main employment source in his area. He was then asked to name the second largest employment source. He replied that it was welfare. These are damning statements. This is why my hon. friend from Lanark and Renfrew (Mr. McBride) and I are bringing this matter to the attention of the House.