

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

stricken, suffer from a lack of interest and tend to be abandoned.

There are a great many resources that could be developed, from a tourist point of view and all other points of view.

I would like to know what the new minister is going to do in this area. How does he intend to develop it or to help it, since it mainly lacks financial means. We have almost all the other means required. As for financial means, we do not have them any longer. Taxpayers who have remained there have been overtaxed and now nearly all houses are on sale.

In the town of Scotstown, for instance, even if properties worth about \$20,000 are offered at \$5,000, nobody wants to buy them. The same situation prevails in the three municipalities I just mentioned.

In Coaticook, for instance, an industry employing 250 people is closing down in June. That is not likely to boost the economy of that town.

Mr. Speaker, almost all the areas in the riding I represent are poverty-stricken. Those are abandoned areas, in urgent need of help. Assistance should not be given only to Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick or Newfoundland. Areas which once were prosperous are now in need of assistance. The situation is worse than in some areas of Newfoundland and other provinces which have become just about incapable of looking after themselves.

So, Mr. Speaker, I should like the minister to tell us if he can undertake immediately the research work necessary to analyse the causes of this decline and to provide the means of coping with it in the near future.

We have reached the point where the people have to move out of those towns and find jobs in the big cities of the United States. Houses are selling at ridiculous prices; business, industry and church revenues are getting lower and lower. From one year to the next, farmers who were successful in the past are getting deeply into debt, and their products must be sold at a loss. The businessman who operates a factory far from any large centre, such as in Lake Megantic for instance, must pay the same salaries as in Montréal, where industries pay high wages. Moreover, means of transportation are inadequate and very costly. Now it has become almost impossible for the industries of those regions to compete with the big industries in Montréal, Quebec or elsewhere.

Well then, Mr. Speaker, if we do not want those cities and those areas to disappear, the

[Mr. Latulippe.]

government should do something and find practical solutions in order to assist them. Every day the situation is deteriorating. Everywhere, at the level of the constituency, people are losing faith.

[English]

• (10:20 p.m.)

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

**Mr. Russell C. Honey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development):** One can have a great deal of understanding and sympathy for the case outlined by the hon. member who has just spoken. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, since I have only three minutes in which to reply, and in order that I can keep my remarks in perspective, I might refer to the question which the hon. member posed to the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development (Mr. Marchand) on March 6—I am quoting, now, from the *Hansard* of that date.

Could he tell the house whether his program intended to abolish regional disparities will be amended in such a way that the Sherbrooke area and some neighbouring areas will be considered as special areas?

The hon. member has dealt tonight with the situation in the Sherbrooke area and other areas. As he knows, there is legislation before the house at the present time which among other things will, if passed by parliament, establish a new department of Regional Economic Expansion. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has indicated to parliament and the country his concern that disparities in economic advantages in various regions of Canada should be reduced as far as reasonably possible in order that Canadians throughout the country might enjoy the advantages and amenities which are generally considered appropriate for Canadians in what might be described as the more affluent parts of the nation. When this legislation is passed, if indeed it is, we shall have set up a new department under a new minister, and parliament will have given it the opportunity to do the things which the Prime Minister and other members of the government have indicated should be done to equalize opportunities for Canadians wherever they may live.

To deal more specifically with the particular question raised by the hon. member, may I remind the house that the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development has indicated in this chamber and in other public statements that when the legislation now before