

industrial development, tourism, agriculture, mineral exploration and development and science and technology.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stevens: It goes on:

McClelland and Stevens expressed pleasure that an agreement has been finalized.

It continues:

The federal government is well aware of British Columbia's program for economic renewal and this agreement will allow the province to move ahead without any additional delay—

That is attributed to me.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stevens: It continues:

McClelland said the \$525 million in joint funding clears the way for provincial government action in priority spending areas.

Let me just divert from the press release. I think it should be made abundantly clear that what the NDP did during the negotiations with the Province of British Columbia is unforgivable. The NDP cast doubt on our negotiations. The NDP indicated there was some doubt whether we would reach a final agreement—

Mr. Riis: \$600 million.

Mr. Stevens: I can only tell you, Mr. Speaker, through that entire period there was the best of faith on both sides, namely, the provincial government and the federal government, in arriving at the agreement we announced today.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It was \$650 million.

Mr. Stevens: The press release goes on to state:

The Minister noted that the discussions with the federal government during the ERDA talks have also resulted in the establishment of a framework under which the two governments will also share equally in the spending of an additional \$450 million under the Industrial and Regional Development Program.

The net effect of this IRDP agreement, which I anticipate will be finalized at a meeting of industry ministers—

That is of the other provinces, the territories, and the federal government to be held in Vancouver on May 27. The release continues:

—will see our two governments jointly spend a total of \$575 million over the next five years on economic development here in British Columbia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stevens: The press release goes on:

There could be no better proof that there is a new and productive relationship between the federal government and the province.

What a contrast, Mr. Speaker. What a contrast with the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner), the Opposition itself and certainly with the socialists. We are here to help build British Columbia, to help build Canada.

Mr. Siddon: How many B.C. Members are over there?

Supply

Mr. Stevens: We are not here to go out of our way to tear B.C. down and discredit some worthwhile enterprise in that fine province.

The press release continues:

To my mind, it demonstrates that governments working in a co-operative fashion, can together develop mutually acceptable and fair agreements in the interests of job-creation and new economic activity.

That is Mr. McClelland speaking.

In short, I am very pleased to say that not only were we able, where the former Government was unable, to conclude an ERDA agreement on November 23 last year with the province, but once that agreement was in place we were able to work out the funding to which I have referred and have now in place the various agreements that will be signed, including a forestry agreement to be signed very shortly by the Minister of State for Forestry (Mr. Merrithew) in the amount of \$300 million alone.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1600)

Mr. Stevens: In short, there may be Members from British Columbia on that side of the House who do not believe in their province, but I can tell all citizens of British Columbia that there are 19 Members of Parliament on this side of the House who put British Columbia first and foremost, and that it is as a result of their efforts that such favourable ERDA funding has been arranged. When I say that, we must bear in mind that this is the largest by far of any funding arrangement of an ERDA nature which has been agreed to between the federal Government and the Province of British Columbia.

An Hon. Member: In history.

Mr. Stevens: In history.

Mr. Riis: How does it compare with other provinces?

Mr. Stevens: Again that socialist friend of mine is catching up. Province by province the funding which British Columbia is receiving, any way one wants to look at it, is one of the highest that we have been able to sign to this date. There is no doubt about that.

Mr. Riis: "One of".

Mr. Stevens: As far as I am concerned—and the Hon. Member will see the various agreements which will be concluded as a result of this funding—it is something that we can all be proud of. I can assure him that the Government of Canada is very pleased with the arrangement we have been able to arrive at.

Mr. Riis: It took an Opposition Day motion to get this announcement.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, I guess you have to give credit when credit is due. Maybe the Hon. Member gave us a nice platform, but it certainly was not, in the slightest, his efforts or