

This regional economic development board would require a budget beyond the potential of the municipalities. So, they are about to ask the provincial and federal governments to participate in the preparation of this budget, the proportion of their contribution to be determined later on. The experts suggest, for instance, that the federal government, should provide 40 per cent of the funds, the provincial government 40 per cent also, and the participating municipalities 20 per cent.

That economic development board would, for example, help existing industries. We have noted that some firms were doing badly and, sometimes, had to close their doors. Very often, it was a situation which could have been adjusted if we had been aware that the federal and provincial governments could offer certain services. In fact, some manufacturers might have profited by the assistance of people conversant with those matters.

The board would find additional markets for existing industry. That would apply especially to small industries, which have not always the means to find new markets.

● (5:40 p.m.)

That economic development board intends also to set up a sort of industrial fund, through public subscription. I like the attitude of our mayors who are not always counting on the government for everything, while doing nothing. They are ready to make the first move and to prove that they have confidence in the future of their area. A regional industrial fund, made up through public subscription, would help existing and future businesses. It would be administered by competent people. This clearly shows that they have no wish to remain inactive in a given situation but intend rather to use all the means likely to boost their regional economy.

That regional economic development board would also have the task of promoting intelligently industrial, business and touristic opportunities in our area. It would specifically promote tourist industry, organize recreational centres, sports centres, tourist centres, in an area rich in possibilities, and would then publicize its achievements in areas, other provinces, other countries, in order to get the most out of them.

Such a board would of course help new ventures as much as possible and might even serve as a referee in cases where the life of a firm is jeopardized by disagreement between

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labour and management or problems of a different nature.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is expedient to give such an example, because I am one of those who believe that the federal government alone will never be able to check unemployment in a reasonable proportion, no more than the provincial government could. Every citizen, each town and each region will have to make up its mind and take the matter in its own hands and establish a regional economic development body.

I presume, without knowing the details of the legislation mentioned this afternoon by the hon. minister that its purpose will be to help these organizations of regional economic development which will have given evidence of being serious in their work and have shown that they have competent people in their service.

To the minister who spoke this afternoon, I submit the request of the mayors in my area—the members of the Mauricie Mayors Conference—who wish to be able to expect assistance from the federal government. They have also requested aid from the provincial government and they are expecting a definite reply within a few weeks. I believe that this reply may arrive at about the same time the federal legislation comes into force.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to stress that blaming the government for an unemployment situation about which we are all concerned, even if it is not as serious as it has been in the past, is not enough. We should rather propose constructive measures and for my part I would suggest that we try to synchronize the efforts made by the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

I know that the Canadian Federation of Mayors, of which I was a member, has been concerned for several years about that problem and has been suggesting for quite a long time that the municipalities should be invited, when the federal and provincial governments meet to discuss problems dealing with municipalities. But in certain circles, some objections have always been raised, because the municipalities are deemed to be the instruments of the provincial government. Nevertheless, I think that the municipal governments, through the mayors, should be called at least as observers to know exactly what happens. I know that in many cases they would have suggestions to make which would help to complete the efforts of the federal and provincial governments in order to cope with unemployment.