

Montreal either. We have talked about the loans program, and we have placed before Parliament on numerous occasions and again in committee the feelings we have had about the program. We suggested major amendments to the Regional Development Incentives Act which could have made an act which is not functioning in many parts of Canada more functional. We have suggested the use of special pieces of legislation now on the books which could help with the cyclical short-term problem in Montreal, Vancouver and other parts of Canada which are suffering from a temporary setback, perhaps as a result of the general economic situation.

● (9:00 p.m.)

We have talked about the need for more emphasis on resource incentive programs for resource development, which really means economic expansion. We have talked about the need for consultation with the provinces, with the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council and with other agencies. We have talked about the absolute need for an expanding economy, and the implications of this sort of thing for the regions of Canada which suffer in terms of disparity.

I think we have presented a most reasonable approach to the basis of our objections. At least I can speak for myself, and I would not want to implicate anybody in my own thinking, but a very reasonable approach to the reasons why this bill is not functional has been put forward: it is diluting an existing program without the added advantage of assisting the area for which it was designed. I listened to the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador (Mr. Peddle) and to a few other members who mentioned the fact that every time we touch a piece of legislation here, no matter how logical the arguments or what the motivation, there is always a tendency, perhaps inspired, for members to try to accuse the person presenting his case of being against existing areas and regions which suffer. For this reason, I shall not make any remarks about the position which has been taken by our party, or the position which has been taken by members of the other parties in the House, because that position has been well stated for the record. It will be repeated on numerous occasions in the next six or seven months. It will be read with some interest by the premiers of the Atlantic provinces, the premier of British Columbia, the premiers of the Prairie provinces and the premiers who are concerned with regional disparity in the central Canadian provinces, that is areas outside the great urban parts of Canada. I think we will agree that the position we have taken on this bill is a logical and reasonable position.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, the only thing I want to say tonight is that I have been here for two and a half years since the election in 1968, yet I have never seen a situation which is so regrettable as the one existing on December 18, 1970 at 9.05 in this House of Commons. Every member who has spoken in the last several hours has apologized for taking part in the debate. They have apologized for taking part in this particular debate which

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affects every region in Canada. The hon. member who preceded me made a beautiful statement. It was very brief. It lasted ten or fifteen minutes, but he did not feel like continuing. My hon. friend from Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador, my hon. friends from Nova Scotia, some members of the Liberal party who hardly ever speak, all apologized for taking part in the debate here at 9.10 on December 18 just before Christmas. I have been placed in the position where my rights as a Canadian, and my rights as a representative of the people, have been jeopardized because I cannot stand here this evening with the goodwill of the members of the House of Commons and do an effective job of presenting again to the Canadian people the rational reasons for objecting to this bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, back in the early years of the 18th Century, Alexander Pope in "The Rape of the Lock", if I recall my poetry correctly, wrote something like this:

The hungry judges soon the sentence sign
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine

I cannot think of a phrase which better sums up the government's procedural approach to this bill. I suppose I would be a little out of order if I said that the House of Commons, by the procedure adopted by the government, has been blackmailed. We came here on December 10, and started to debate on the referral the second reading of this important bill. It has been pushed through. I cannot understand the reason for the urgency. The minister admits the bill can have no effect. Dr. Brewis of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, as well as the advisers to the minister, all said the bill could have no effect in the immediate future. It is not the sort of thing which will shake the whole economy of an area in a few weeks. Regardless of whether we should designate some of the most industrialized parts of this nation, what is the reason for trying to squeeze this through before Christmas, before we can give the premiers of the various provinces, the people of Canada and those citizens who are interested in economic development, a chance to react?

The minister knows he can squeeze his bill through when the House resumes in the early part of January. Does it not make sense that we should have allowed the bill to stand, regardless of whether we agree with it or not, until the Christmas recess is over so that we would be in a position to receive constructive reaction with regard to it? Perhaps even those who agree with it would like to hear constructive reaction to it. I do not agree with the bill. I say it is bad for the country, bad for regional development and not good for Montreal. To me, this is very suspicious. I am probably offending the delicate ears of a lot of members across the way, but this is the way I feel about it. I think we should have let this stand for a couple of weeks to allow for reaction. I do not agree with amending the act to include Montreal. We