

Industry, Science and Technology

Mr. Rideout: Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the Member's comments and his speech. We in New Brunswick face the same types of problems that were referred to, with ACOA and what it means. We had DRIE and we had DREE. We are very concerned with where this particular Department is going and what its influence is going to be. We feel that in the long run we are probably going in the wrong direction, and really not going to achieve all that we hoped to with this Department.

When we couple that with the ERDA agreements being in arrears and not negotiated, and cut-backs in ACOA, I have grave concerns as to where the economy is going and what is really going to happen. I believe that the Member is alluding to the same things in his constituency and in his concerns, and perhaps he may wish to comment on that.

Mr. Funk: I thank my hon. colleague for his remarks. I certainly have come to realize that when people try to read their papers they find that some of these trends have been there for a long time. Being in this House and hearing firsthand from Members from the various regions of the country, it is becoming very clear that in fact this is a pattern. Any kind of systematic development of local economies is really going by the boards. Local initiatives are being effectively starved by the Government's approach. It does not take very much money. The Government is still in some respects ladling out large sums of money, although there have been some cuts.

Those funds are not going where they are needed. They are not going to support local initiatives. They are certainly not going into any kind of planned approach, and that is what is essential so that the economy of the centre of the country can support the economies of the regions and vice versa. We should have an integrated economy so that we are not forever vulnerable to international tides which wash over us from time to time. Certainly you cannot isolate yourself entirely, but you can develop better rounded economies than we have now in the regions. The Government's approach makes the problems worse rather than giving us any assistance to improve the situation.

• (1630)

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak on Bill

C-3, an Act to establish the Department of Industry, Science and Technology. This Bill also repeals the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and makes consequential amendments to other acts.

I would like to focus my remarks on the regional development mandate of the department.

In June, 1987, the Government transferred responsibility for development initiatives in the Atlantic region to the newly created Atlantic Opportunities Agency.

In August, 1987, responsibility for development initiatives in western Canada was transferred to the newly created Department of Western Economic Diversification.

The federal Government also created FEDNOR in the last Parliament which is an agency to promote economic development in northern Ontario.

Northerners waited hopefully for an announcement of a northern development program and agency. Such an announcement never came. Every region of the country except for the northern Territories has its own regional development program. The Atlantic Region has the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the West has Western Diversification, northern Ontario has FEDNOR and Ontario and Quebec have special agreements with the federal Government. Where does the North fit into the regional economic development priorities of the Government? We seem to have been forgotten.

Last week in a meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, I asked the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Andre) whether he had any special plans for northern economic development. His reply amazed me. His response suggested that there is no need for his Department to have any special program for the North since the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development exists.

He actually said:

We have got a whole department. It is called the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

He went on to say:

I guess in some sense Western Diversification is to the West as Northern Development is to the North, a department of Government that has its economic development responsibility for that region.