

*Rural Development*

going on in rural Canada and, furthermore, unlike some previous governments, is resolved to do a very great deal about it. I think the bill before us tonight and the attitude of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) are symptomatic of the concern of the government.

**Mr. Winkler:** Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question? I should like to ask him whether he listened to my contribution to the debate on redistribution, in which I made a full explanation of the situation and suggested how it could be rectified. If he did so, the statement he has made is not valid.

**Mr. Faulkner:** Mr. Speaker, my statements were related to what the hon. member has said tonight, and that is all that concerns me at this time. His speeches cannot constantly be qualified by what he has said on previous occasions.

The other point I should like to make relates to something said by the hon. member for Kent (Ont.), (Mr. Danforth) during this debate. He referred to a fear which possibly exists in rural areas, that some of this program is designed to move people off the land, and that the solution to rural poverty is wholesale migration. I think that is a legitimate fear, but I do not think it is a valid criticism. I do not think it was ever intended by the minister, within the framework of this legislation, to provide for such an exodus.

**Mr. Danforth:** Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit another question? I certainly do not wish to inject a partisan attitude to this debate, but if the hon. gentleman is at all familiar with the promises made by his party during the last election campaign as to how they would solve farm problems he should be more aware of the cause for fear in the rural population as it exists today.

**Mr. Faulkner:** I certainly hope that those individuals who incorporated promises of wholesale exodus from rural areas in their campaigns were defeated at the last election. Very few of us who are fortunate enough to be here incorporated that kind of promise in our election speeches.

**Mr. Winkler:** Walter Gordon is still with us.

**Mr. Faulkner:** The alternative, of course, is the concept of better land use. The hon. member for Kent (Ont.) developed some of the alternative possibilities, particularly when he referred to the tourism potential. I am

[Mr. Faulkner.]

very mindful of this alternative in my own riding.

The hon. member for Grey-Bruce mentioned the need for development of small industries in rural areas. I think it is imperative that members on all sides of the house make it clear to audiences in rural areas, who fear that somehow the solution envisaged in this legislation is some sort of exodus from farm areas, that this is not the purpose of the program.

I should like to make one or two specific points. I recognize, as do all hon. members, that the problem of poverty necessitates that priority be given to areas of chronic low income. I am concerned about the effects of this legislation on the more affluent, yet not totally affluent areas of Ontario. Although the problems in the Peterborough riding may not be as severe as those in other areas, they are nevertheless grave. It is very important that attention be given within the framework of this legislation to those areas which may not be chronic areas of low income, but nevertheless have grave problems. I trust the minister will give consideration to this situation.

My other point, which I think is extremely important, relates to the provision in this bill for the participation of residents of these areas. I have had some experience recently within my riding with what is going on at the provincial level in Ontario, and I think it is fair to say that there is a deep concern within rural Ontario, if my area can be taken as typical, about intrusions into the basic rights of citizens. They are not anxious to be patronized from above by governments. What they want more than anything else is simply an opportunity to exercise the sort of initiative of which they are capable, and it is important to stress this dimension in this bill.

This is not something that will be solved by a group of individuals located in Ottawa or Toronto. It will only be solved by an active participation on the part of the residents themselves in planning programs for their particular areas. This has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt by the results of the village development programs instituted in countries like India.

There must be greater efforts made to inform rural areas as to what will be available to them through this program, what this bill intends and how they in fact can participate. It is my experience that this information is not available to them, or has not been brought to their attention as yet.