

[Text]

is all within 100 miles of where we are sitting and they are all convinced that because they are so close they are the forgotten region. So it shows you that everybody thinks they are forgotten.

• 1615

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. McBride. Any questions, Mr. Cobbe? Are there any further questions?

Mr. Marchand: I just want to make a few comments considering the atmosphere and maybe we are not in the mood again you know.

You are aware more than I am that these are very difficult problems to solve. They are difficult in themselves socially from the economic point of view and because we are dealing with disadvantaged people, too, because it is much more difficult to deal with this type of people than with the well off. That means we have to be as little political as politicians can in dealing with those problems. I do not say that we can be nonpolitical but when you have to trace a line and say, "Well these will be designated regions"; of course, all those who are not within are dissatisfied. It is the same thing with the special areas. It is the same thing with the incentives, so if there is too much politics in this I do not think it can assist the pressures that will come. It is difficult.

If you look at the political map you know very well that all the disadvantaged regions are not necessarily those that voted for the present government. So the pressure inside is very strong too. If the pressure came from outside it would be impossible. This is why we have to make an effort to be as nonpolitical as we can because the purpose of this Department is not to help the Liberals or the Conservatives or the NDP, it is to help those who are in need wherever they are and whoever they voted for. The problem is difficult and politically it is much more difficult because provincial governments are involved who have some political interests, and municipalities are involved.

When you have to reconcile all this it is not an easy job and it is much more difficult for the Department that has to deal with all this. What I want to say is not that we should not be critical of this because I know that we probably have already made mistakes and that we are going to make some. The question is not to prevent anybody from being critical. I think we should be critical of all the programs, but I think we should not be too political because the whole thing is going to break down one day. So we are making a

[Interpretation]

Le président: Merci, monsieur McBride. Y a-t-il d'autres questions?

M. Marchand: Je voudrais faire quelques remarques sur l'esprit du problème, mais nous ne sommes peut-être pas dans le bain.

Nous avons de difficiles problèmes à résoudre du point de vue social et économique. En outre, il est plus difficile de traiter avec des gens défavorisés qu'avec des gens riches. Je pense qu'il faut manifester le moins d'esprit de parti que possible, mais non pas jusqu'au point de se montrer apolitiques. Toutefois, lorsqu'il s'agit de déterminer les régions prioritaires, il y en a toujours qui se sentent laissés pour compte. On constate la même chose avec les régions dites spéciales et avec l'aide au développement. Le problème est complexe.

En examinant la carte politique, vous remarquerez que les régions défavorisées ne sont pas forcément les régions qui ont voté pour le gouvernement en place. Les pressions internes ont aussi leur importance. Voilà pourquoi nous devons essayer de faire abstraction de la politique. Ce ministère n'a pas pour but de consolider la position des Libéraux, des Conservateurs ou du NPD, mais d'aider les gens qui sont dans le besoin, quel que soit le député pour qui ils ont voté. Le problème est d'autant plus complexe que les gouvernements provinciaux et les municipalités ont des intérêts politiques en cause.

La difficulté, c'est de concilier tous ces intérêts. Il ne s'agit pas de se mettre à l'abri des critiques: nous avons déjà commis des erreurs et nous en commettrons d'autres. Il s'agit seulement de tempérer nos ardeurs politiques pour éviter un éclatement de la situation. L'insatisfaction ne mène à rien de constructif.