

The CHAIRMAN: When you say "our committee", are you referring to this committee or to one of the other committees?

Mr. WHELAN: One of the other committees that could help this committee, and help these people in northern Ontario to develop their area.

Mr. CRAM: The Northeastern Ontario Regional Development Council would welcome any one of your committees or all of them, and would arrange the tour for you and see that you were well conducted and meet the right people.

Mr. WHELAN: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we have a time problem. I would, with the indulgence of the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, like to take up a minute myself. Although Mr. Whelan is a newcomer to our committee, certainly in the few meetings he has attended he has endeavoured to get himself on the record to equal Mr. Bower, who is one of our most conscientious attenders of meetings and a long-standing member. After another couple of meetings Mr. Whelan is apt to get the prize for the most questions asked, because of his vast knowledge of agriculture and all the other matters he is able to bring in.

One thing I would like to say which perhaps may promote further questioning—I think Mr. Peters or Mr. Legault will probably bring it up anyway—is that we have dealt with this before but your criticisms of the area development program is not solving the problem you want solved. I think we must bear two facts in mind. The first is that the area development program was designed primarily to combat unemployment. What we are really talking about now, particularly in the case of Ontario as opposed to the Atlantic provinces, is something which is a departure and something that cannot be accomplished, particularly in Ontario, at the present time under the area development program, and this is a policy of decentralization of industry which certainly involves initiatives by the provincial governments.

Now, this is a separate matter. For example, in the province of Quebec this is a matter of policy. In the province of Manitoba it is the opposite, they want to centralize. In the Atlantic provinces, as it happens, because we are all under designation because of the unemployment, it includes the whole area, but even in the Atlantic provinces there are policies to centralize within. It is because they are at a different stage of development than the north, they are not as developed as the north. But from northern and western Ontario we have heard—and we will probably hear the same thing from eastern Ontario—that there is a similar problem involving the decentralization of industry. I am just mentioning this in order to put our comments in perspective.

The second thing, of course, is the municipal tax base. Even with decentralization you are going to have municipalities without industries. I make these comments at this point in the hope that it may help further questioning. Mr. Peters, you are next on the list.

Mr. PETERS: Mr. Chairman, may I apologize for and explain, both to the committee and to the representatives from the north, my inefficiency in the arrangements that were made. The Northeastern Ontario Regional Development Association has been very interested in this problem from some time but I—perhaps foolishly, looking at it from a political point of view—was of the opinion that possibly another agency set up by the Prime Minister would probably have greater influence on the Minister of Industry in the changing of the designation and the criteria behind it than