

Supply

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the point to my colleague opposite that the number of regional development agreements we have signed are commensurate with the desires of the provinces. As I indicated to my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, we have ample funds to go to the provinces and discuss renewal on their terms for all the new agreements the provinces wish renewed. We have those resources. In some cases, as the member knows, with the consent of the provinces, we have signed agreements involving more money than the ones they replaced. In others, with the consent of the provinces, they have involved less money. These co-operation agreements are designed not like the old ERDAs for the most part to be five-year agreements, but the new ones can be implemented for two or three or four years. They can be topped up or changed. Again, there is more flexibility there. I want to assure the hon. member that there is no lack of resources from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to meet the legitimate aims of the provinces that wish to develop certain sectoral agreements.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)): I am sorry, the period for questions and comments has expired. Perhaps the hon. member for Essex—Windsor could come back with another question after we hear our next speaker. Continuing debate. The Hon. Member for South West Nova.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe that the rules do require that in the case of a comment or question, there is at least a chance to respond to that comment or question. I certainly intend to do so very briefly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)): We will give the hon. member for Essex—Windsor 30 seconds more.

Mr. MacKay: That's flexibility.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I am glad we are all so flexible today.

While the minister may be able to make these commitments for Atlantic Canada—and I will hold him to them in committee and elsewhere—we cannot get similar commitments from him for some of the massive agreements now running out, such as the \$300 million forestry agreement in British Columbia, to which despite prod-

ding from various colleagues, the Minister of Forestry has not yet been prepared to make any commitment.

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister is going to stay to listen. I listened to him at least on television.

I want to reread the motion today because I think it needs rereading. It is an Official Opposition motion presented by our side. It states:

That this House condemn the government for its failure to protect, support and promote the regional economies of Canada, in order to eliminate regional disparities in the Atlantic provinces, Northern Ontario and Western and Northern Canada.

I think the direction this government has given to Canadians is bringing on and will continue to bring on regional disparities. I think we have seen this in the free trade agreement where across Canada the primary industries will be the ones to suffer. We see it in agriculture with hog retaliation in the United States. We see it in the fisheries where we must give some west coast fish to the U.S. to process and we see it in forestry across Canada.

As we have to give up our primary industries, it will mean that they will become service industries for the United States under the free trade agreement. Look at the fisheries on the west coast. I can see it on the east coast because the government is taking the fisheries—and later I will deal with the fisheries as an alienating problem—more towards confusion on the east coast. You will probably see Americans take up the licences to fish our fish and eventually land the fish in the United States, as can be done on the west coast.

I also want to say that the free trade agreement should have had a clause that protected our primary resources, our primary industries, which were the economic basis of rural Canada. This is one area in which I feel our regional economies are going to suffer and are already suffering.

The other aspect is the goods and services tax presently before the House. In eastern Canada, I see it affecting our tourism industry. Every person who comes to visit, even though he or she can have a rebate, will be deterred by a 7 per cent tax in addition to the tax already in place. It will affect, I think initially, and probably for a long time, our tourism industry. Certainly, we are hearing that from the tourism operators on the east coast.