

*Supply—Regional Development*

pleased that the interview took place. However I believe the delegation went home not much wiser than when they came here. This is the thing that is worrying a large number of regions all across the Dominion of Canada, but I speak specifically for the province of British Columbia.

I was very interested in the remarks of the preceding speaker. He spoke very generally, but I think he hit the nail right on the head. We are wondering what the minister's plans are. We have been given to understand from other ministers that a new program, an incentive program, is going to be introduced. The idea behind the program is to liquidate the pockets of high unemployment across the country, as well as the areas in which there is a large degree of regional disparity. What I should like to point out to the minister is this: I do not think we can afford to neglect any area in Canada. Even if an area has a relatively high degree of employment, such as the area of Kootenay West which I represent, where the earnings per capita compare favourably with some of the best areas in Canada, conditions can change. What is happening rapidly in my area, as well as in many other areas, is that in some of the larger towns and the rural areas we are seeing unemployment creeping in, and it is getting worse. This condition must be checked or what can be classed now as a relatively good area will soon reach a stage where it will be one of the depressed areas. This is why we are so interested in seeing programs developed on a regional basis to deal with these problems.

I think the minister is well aware of the incentive program that was introduced in the Okanagan. I do know this program has cost the government some money, but it has been very successful. Some industries have been brought into the Okanagan area which would never have come there unless some type of incentive had been arranged. The result, of course, has been industrial development and an increase in permanent jobs in that area. This is what we are after. As the minister knows, the brief which was presented to him by the city of Nelson, referred to the loss of industry in that area. There was a reference also to the rapid rise in taxation in the district, and the very low industrial base upon which taxation is imposed.

This situation is rather alarming, particularly when we know that the area has all the attributes for real progress. Around Trail and Rossland we have the C.M. and S. complex

[Mr. Harding.]

and a great deal of industrial activity. In the northern section of the constituency there is a good climate and we have the resources, hydro power and manpower. We cannot afford to neglect all these things. I am going to suggest that programs be investigated in conjunction with provincial, municipal and regional governments in an attempt to do something about keeping the employment picture in this part of British Columbia very good.

• (9:10 p.m.)

There are two or three other points I should like to make, Mr. Chairman, before I sit down. It is always interesting to hear about the new incentive plans that are to be advanced by the present administration. Surely the minister, in this first semester of this session of a new parliament, should be able to give us some idea of what is going to happen in other parts of Canada, other than the developments he has drawn to our attention in relation to the Atlantic provinces and parts of Quebec. I think we are entitled to this information. I also suggest to the minister that in his closing remarks this evening he deal with the points that have been raised.

I understand that at least seven or eight other members would like to make brief comments about regional development so I will not take much more time. I understand that questions of manpower come under the minister's department; if they do not they certainly fit hand in glove with the department's operations. Unemployment and incentives must go hand in hand.

One last point, Mr. Chairman, that I almost forgot and it has to do with the minister's department. In my constituency there is a town called Creston. As far as manpower services are concerned, Creston is bracketed within the east Kootenay area, which has a fairly high employment rate as a result of C.M.S activities around Kimberley. However, in other respects Creston is really divorced from the east Kootenay area although, as I say, it is included in the employment figures for the whole area. Creston is an area with a very high rate of unemployment. It is in a pocket almost by itself. This is a region into which the department should move and provide the incentive for setting up new industries, thus cutting down the severe rate of winter unemployment. I just draw that to the attention of the minister and trust that his department will look at the matter this coming year.