

Regional Development Incentives Act

listened to the remarks of my colleagues, and as I have realized that I am not on the committee which will receive this bill, I thought I should make just a few remarks in the few minutes that are remaining to debate Bill C-35 "An act to amend the Regional Development Incentives Act."

There are no regional incentives available in my area in British Columbia. I believe that the westernmost limit of the DREE boundary is Revelstoke, British Columbia, although perhaps that booming town of Kelowna was once considered a part of the DREE area.

It is probably a good idea to extend this act because there are needs in many areas of the country, particularly in Atlantic Canada which relies a great deal on DREE. I suppose that the extension of five years, or as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has suggested, two years, will give the government an opportunity to redraft the legislation. However, there are one or two points which I would like to stress to the government at this time.

Like all government programs which involve handouts, the DREE program is subject to a number and variety of abuses. It also produces a number of bad effects in some of the areas in which it does not exist. There are many stories which hon. members can relate, and I will not go into the details although I have heard them, where in effect a particular business in a particular area receives the benefit of a DREE grant and, as a result, a short while later a perfectly viable competitor of that business in a non-DREE area is forced to close down because of the competitive advantage created by the DREE grant to the business which received it. The grants are usually used to extend, expand, or even commence a business.

There is a need for the extension of the program in the business field, but I think that the fact there is a need for this extension indicates, or should indicate, to the government that its policies for industrial stimulation are inadequate in the areas where this help is needed and that the program itself must be tightened up to prevent the kinds of abuses which exist. There should also be measures to prevent the inequities where an area is being helped, while another area is being hurt.

What should be learnt from the fact that DREE has had to be created and extended is that the government should have a better look at its over-all industrial strategy so that programs such as this can be eliminated and business can be left to expand on its own without the use of taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Regional Development.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, I thank hon. members for their co-operation this afternoon in getting Bill C-35 to committee. We do have a few extra minutes, and I assume that we will move immediately to private members' hour. I would just state before some hon. members leave that next Wednesday we will be dealing with the Committee of the Whole stage of Bill C-19 which, I understand, is close to being wrapped up.

Mr. Knowles: Not next Wednesday.

Mr. Collenette: Pardon me, it is not next Wednesday, but next Thursday.

Mr. Knowles: Then I do not need to correct you.

Mr. Collenette: Then we will go on to Bill C-3, "An act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act". Of course next Wednesday, as my friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was most agitated to tell us, is an opposition day in the name of the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council realizes that next Wednesday we are giving the Liberals the opportunity to vote for the same motion which they voted for last December 13.

Mr. Malone: Mr. Speaker, could the parliamentary secretary indicate when Bill S-6 will come before the House? Will it be next week?

Mr. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, it was our intention to bring Bill S-6 before the House this afternoon, but there was so much discussion on Bill C-35. We were also intending to call Bill C-22, for which the President of the Treasury Board was present most of the afternoon. Bill C-22 was ahead of Bill S-6. I cannot give the hon. member a commitment, but it will be soon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being four o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills, notices of motions, and private bills.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall order No. 4, standing in the name of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell), stand by unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.