

Regional Development Incentives Act

now before the House. He ought to determine whether the amount of money being spent by the Canadian people for economic development in certain areas will benefit all Canadians, or whether some of that money will go to other countries in the form of dividends.

• (8:50 p.m.)

I will be amazed if the minister states he is not aware or is not concerned about whether the dividends we are paying in Canadian tax dollars are staying in Canada or going outside our borders. The same applies to the type of control over the tax dollars being put into this type of program. We must be concerned about whether our tax dollars being used for economic expansion are benefiting Canadians or whether they are benefiting other people who are taking over industry in this country.

Not very long ago certain areas in Canada were referred to as growth centres. I welcomed the report of the minister when he named the growth centres in Canada. The area of Moose Jaw, which I represent, was designated as a growth centre. I thought that many things would happen. I thought the minister and the department would study the situation and attempt to do something for these growth centres. We now know these growth centres mean very little to the minister and his department. Although they are studying certain situations in this country, they are not looking at the original intent of the legislation passed in this House. Assistance was to be given to these growth centres to enable them to catch up with other parts of Canada. The legislation now before us does little to enhance the position of the original growth centre concept which we thought would benefit Canada.

We were very pleased when the government accepted the motion for production of papers No. 224, dated March 10, 1970. A copy of the study of ways to implement mobility undertaken by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion in the fiscal year 1967-68, as mentioned in the answer to question No. 1323 put last session, was made available. No doubt much time could be spent studying the consultants' report. The report indicated that people migrating from rural to urban areas tend to find employment lowest in status and lowest in income.

Agriculture and fishing should be treated as an industry in the concept of this bill. Too often hon. members, particularly those in the Liberal party, refer to the fact that our rural area represents only 10 per cent of the Canadian population. If the minister were really concerned, he would realize that the farming and fishing industries in Canada are still our most important industries and should be treated accordingly. Somewhere along the line the government has forgotten this fact. They have failed to realize that if we assisted the farming and fishing industries of Canada, many of today's problems would not exist. As indicated in the consultants' report, many people are forced to leave the fishing and farming industries and move to our large cities. We should be concerned about the situation in which they then find themselves. If the minister is sincere, he will try to bring about an equitable situation for all Canadians.

[Mr. Skoberg.]

Under the program of the Department of Manpower and Immigration, the only people able to receive assistance are those employed in the receiving centres or who have obtained employment through consultation with Manpower. Many people who move to the nearest area where work is available are not covered by the Manpower program, such as farmers, fishermen and others who are self-employed.

If the rights of everyone are to be recognized on an equitable basis, the minister and departments of government must be concerned. There must be a large mobility program. There is no cohesion among departments of government with regard to introducing a program that would be of benefit to this country. I strongly urge the minister to consult other departments of government in order to establish a comprehensive program which would be of assistance to Canada. There is no use saying that a particular area of Canada will receive special benefits if the minister is not sincere.

If we are not to have undue hardship, the Department of Labour, the Department of Manpower and Immigration, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and other government departments must work together to create employment. I am sure that enough has been said in this House to make the minister realize that a credible approach must be made to solve this problem. Nothing has been done which suggests that this government is credible in the eyes of the nation. The previous program of this government was not credible. With regard to what they are now proposing we must be suspicious about their attempt to have industry established in needy areas.

I urge the minister to bear in mind that farming and fishing are still the basic industries in Canada. If he does not accept that, he is dragging farmers away from their land and fishermen away from their nets. It will be a situation from which there will be no return.

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the Standing Committee on Regional Development on several occasions has placed on record the position of my party. A number of hon. members have reviewed Bill C-205 in the last few hours, as well as on second reading and referral of the bill to committee on December 10. There has been a detailed explanation as to why we are unhappy with the bill. I think the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) understands my personal objections to the bill. There has been talk about the underlying principles of regional development. It has been stated that this bill applies to a short-term problem which is in direct contrast with the minister's philosophy. The minister contradicted his own position on a number of occasions by admitting that this bill will not have any effect on the problem in the area for which it was designed, even in the next six or seven months. As far as I am concerned he is admitting that this is a bad bill for Canada and at the same time it is no good for Montreal. That is the situation. It is a bad bill for Canada and it is no good for