

Supply

jobs. If they are good corporate citizens, it is difficult for them to take their factories home with them.

He made reference to economic development agreements not having any commitment for renewal in Atlantic Canada. That is simply not true. I want to assure him that we have signed economic development agreements of various types with every Atlantic province. I have two full pages here that I can show him, detailing them. In forestry, every Atlantic province, for example, has a sectoral forestry agreement. My colleague, the Minister of Forestry—and this government is the first government to recognize the importance of forestry by making it a full ministry—is working very closely to make sure that these elements that my colleague talks about for long-term development, silviculture, forest management and a better approach to preserving this resource, is taken.

I just want to say that really what we have here, I guess, is an agreement to disagree. My colleague represents a party of democratic socialism which believes in ever-increasing government involvement in management. We agree that there is a place for government involvement, but we prefer to let Canadians operate on their own initiative and to supply help to those who need it, and to get out of areas where it is no longer required.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is quite correct that there is a basic disagreement. The basic disagreement though is over the question of equality. We, in this party, coming from the kind of philosophic beliefs that move us, believe very strongly in equality, not in complete equality for everybody but in equality of opportunity and in equality of essential condition which should exist within our country. That is why, for us, regional development is such a fundamental, basic, touchstone issue because we see the inequality that exists among regions as so subversive of what this country could be, of how grand and magnificent a community we could build in this country.

• (1330)

I hope the minister from his region which historically has been so unequally dealt with by the rest of the country, will ultimately see the light and recognize that that commitment to equality is crucial and he will start to take some movements toward that.

On the specific points that the minister made, I agree with him quite strongly that decentralization of our regional development efforts is important and local headquarters are important to do that. That is why my suggestion of regional development banks would see those located within the regions that they are meant to serve. It would see those banks being much more activist, making much more effort to make things happen and to make things change rather than just sitting back and waiting for grant applications.

With respect to whether or not there are cuts to ACOA, we can talk about this in committee; I am sure we will. The crucial issue is that there has not been, as there should have been, given the problems of Atlantic Canada, a massive increase in support through ACOA.

In terms of macro-economic effects, I simply make the point that the job expansion record in recent months is quite poor and as interest rates persist at their high level, we are going to see those job-creation rates squeezed just as we have seen the jobless figures in this country go up.

With respect to foreign investment, of course the minister is correct. Foreign investment has played an important role in the development of this country, certainly in the development of my constituency. The point about my constituency is that the great bulk of that foreign investment came in without the financial support of the taxpayers of Canada. That is what I think we have to stop. Our support should be going to Canadians.

Finally, I too have two pages with respect to economic and regional development agreements. I am sure the minister's pages refer to those which are continuing this year. Mine refer, and that is the crucial issue, to those which run out this year.

Mr. MacKay: We are going to renew them.

Mr. Langdon: It is those to which the government must make a commitment. If the minister is prepared to stand up and make a commitment that the money in those regional development agreements will be completely replaced, I certainly would be pleased to hear it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)): The Hon. Minister of Public Works for no more than two minutes, Sir, in this question and answer period.