

which may have an economic impact on a region, such as the abandonment of military installations, but in initiating programs that other departments have established. What is needed is an over-all rationale, because without that rationale we will be simply putting a band aid on a very large sore, which will do little to alleviate the basic problem.

We regard regional disparity and regional development as one of the fundamental concerns of Canadians in our time. I would like to see the minister indicate, not only in his remarks here this evening, but by his action in effective consultation with the provinces, that more is being done about it than just the setting up of a new department and the restructuring of some of the programs that are presently in the department.

The reason for our concern about regional disparity is that perhaps half of the provinces in this country are not on an equal footing with the rest of the country. There is one Canada that is known quite well to those who live in the central part of this nation, extending from Montreal to Windsor. There is another Canada on the fringe which seeks to join the rest of this country in sharing in its natural resources, in its wealth and in its affluence.

• (9:00 p.m.)

This cannot be done, I suggest, simply by a shuffling of programs or by a bit of patching here and there. It can only be done by a determination of the government to tackle the problems seriously and to do this, not unilaterally but with the most effective and far reaching kind of co-ordination and co-operation with other responsible bodies that has ever been seen. As yet, we have not seen an indication of that. We look forward to seeing it very shortly.

Mr. Harding: Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a few words on the problem of regional development. I am rather mindful of the time, and the fact that other members would like to speak, so I will not make my remarks too lengthy. First of all, I should like to point out to the minister that I have not been impressed with the work done by his department to date. I am going to be very frank, Mr. Chairman. I have had questions on the order paper for two and a half months seeking information from the minister's department. If this is an indication of how your department is going to handle regional development, then it is a mighty poor start. It is absolutely and utterly disgraceful for questions asked by members to remain on the

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order paper for this length of time, when many of them are simple questions seeking information which should come to a member so that we know where we are going. We find these questions stay there day after day, until finally the estimates are passed by the house.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Which questions?

Mr. Harding: There are six. Last week I rose on a question of privilege because I had not received answers to these questions. Here we are, the last day for the consideration of estimates, and no answers have been received. If this is an example of how your department is going to work, I am afraid you are off on the wrong foot.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman. Are you sure these questions do not refer to the Department of Manpower and Immigration, rather than to my department?

Mr. Harding: Yes, I am sure; some of them may refer to manpower but some of them refer to your department.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Which ones?

Mr. Harding: I am not going to go through them now. If they refer to manpower, then—

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman. This is a very serious accusation against my department. I should like to know to which questions the hon. member refers. I see here a series of questions, but they all relate to the Department of the Manpower and Immigration. There is not a single one that relates to my department. If there is one, please mention it right now.

Mr. Harding: These questions are listed on pages 39 and 40 of today's order paper. Some of them no doubt refer to the manpower department, Mr. Chairman, but they are tied in, hand and glove, with the minister's department. I want to point this out. The winter works program has gone down the drain. So far as I can make out, nothing has been introduced in our area to replace this particular program.

There is one point I want to raise with the minister. I believe he has had an interview with a group of people from the city of Nelson in my area, with regard to regional development. The minister, I understand, gave them a very courteous interview. I am very