

together. With the direction of WD I think we are going to be far more successful in that.

We can talk about ERDAs and the fact that the Prime Minister made a significant announcement in Brandon, Manitoba, three or four weeks ago, basically tipping our hat to the fact that we do have what we will call a new style of ERDA programming. There is \$242 million which will be shared equally between the four western provinces. The whole direction of those funds will be negotiated through the Western Diversification Office and in particular with Minister Mayer. He has taken a very personal concern about how things will be handled and seems to have quite a rapport with not only his cabinet colleagues from western Canada but also with his provincial counterparts. It is working very well. I know, coming from Manitoba, with the flags that have been showing for us that there is a concern through western diversification, which I call the new ERDA, in rural redevelopment of Manitoba.

• (1730)

We are working to maintain the rural Manitoba communities so that they are viable and so that we do not have people leaving the communities. We want to maintain industry there. We want to give industry the ability to expand in southern Manitoba. We do not want to lose those businesses. Western diversification is taking that attitude to the rural communities of Manitoba with the help of the Manitoba government.

We are also looking at other issues in Manitoba. I know I speak best about Manitoba where we are looking at the communication industry. We are looking at the cultural industry. We are looking at the mining sector. We are looking at the forestry sector. These are all concerns that we have in Manitoba, and they will be addressed by this WD funding and on the joint efforts with the provincial government. I am looking forward to being very, very successful in what we will be doing.

In conclusion, the attitude of this government toward regional development, whether it be in western Canada, eastern Canada, with the FEDNOR agreement, or in southern Ontario, I think it is equally favourable throughout Canada. I think the attitude that we have is not one of just grants. It is one of equal participation. It is one that stimulates the business communities to have an input to get things going, to make things work so that they know at the end of the day that it was not a gift. It is

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something that they earned themselves. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to speak on this important issue, particularly to those in Manitoba and western Canada.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, I was interested in listening to the member's comments. Although he may be here on Parliament Hill in the same office building, after I listened to his speech I think we must live in different worlds in western Canada. The western Canada I live in does not feel that it has been treated well by this government in terms of regional development. The facts are there to prove it, certainly in the province of Saskatchewan.

Twenty-three thousand people have left that province in the last year. Three hundred out of 500 communities lost population. There is a feeling of despair and hopelessness in that province that in all my years of living there and even in the memory of people who were there in the thirties that has never been seen. In all that time nobody has been as depressed about their prospects in that province as they are now.

We look at what the Conservative philosophy has done to that province, now that we have Conservatives both federally and provincially for this period of time. We have seen a debt load that went from the NDP period in Saskatchewan of zero public debt chalked up by the government, with balanced budgets for 11 years in a row to \$4 billion plus that the people of that province now have to carry in debt. We see that in spite of what the Conservatives proclaimed when they were in opposition before 1984. They were always saying that high interest rates were a detriment to western Canada, that what interest rates did was suck money out of the prairie region, out of western Canada, out of the resource producing regions and send it to Toronto from where it is tougher and tougher to get it back. That still persists.

The member brags about deregulation. He knows full well, I am sure, that in many of the communities where there used to be an orderly transportation system, none exists now. Trucking has become worse and worse. Only the major points get covered. The smaller communities are left out. The airline service is now all done by regional carriers with smaller aircraft, which makes it a lot less attractive for people to do business there. We see farm income falling steadily. Certainly, there have been other factors. *Ad hoc* programs from year to year have