

I now wish to talk about small business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I regret to interrupt the Hon. Minister, but his time has expired. We are now into the time for questions and comments. I would like to recognize the Hon. Member for Cardigan (Mr. Binns), the Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Turner) and the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall). Will Hon. Members please govern themselves accordingly. The Hon. Member for Cardigan (Mr. Binns) has the floor.

**Mr. Binns:** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly nice to hear the truth from the Hon. Minister from Halifax instead of the sweeping generalizations of questionable fact as put forward by the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall). I appreciate the remarks which the Minister has made in regard to the labour force and the increasing number of people working in Atlantic Canada as opposed to the suggestions made by the Hon. Member opposite with respect to migration from eastern Canada. I am not surprised that he speaks in terms of migration and in terms of abandonment, because no one in this House knows more about abandonment than the Hon. Member's Party. That was clearly demonstrated, of course, not so much in Atlantic Canada, but in western Canada over the last few years of the Hon. Member's Government when it abandoned the people of western Canada and forced them to move to places such as Saudi Arabia, South America and so on.

I wish to make the point that the former Government certainly abandoned many Canadians. I think the Minister may agree with me when I say that our Government has continued to encourage economic development, job creation and the promotion of the general well-being of the people of Atlantic Canada. In fact, if we look at a few statistics—and I hate to bore the House with statistics—we find they speak for themselves. In July of this year the labour force in Prince Edward Island totalled 64,000. It was at an all-time high. It was up by 3,000 persons over the previous year. In the month before, it was up by 3,000 over the previous year as well. In May, it was up by 5,000 over the previous year. It was up by 4,000 in April, 5,000 in March, 4,000 in February and 3,000 in January. So, indeed, there has not been an outright migration. I wonder if the Minister can confirm that that same kind of economic resurgence is occurring in other areas in Atlantic Canada?

● (1230)

**Mr. McInnes:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly can. I want to say that the positive economic statistics which were spoken about by my friend can be partly attributed to some of the following programs. Under the Small Business Loans Act, this Government has awarded 3,186 loans to various firms in the four Atlantic provinces, for a total amount in excess of \$98 million. Under the Industrial and Regional Development Program, there have been 209 grants which total in excess of \$88 million. Under the ERDA agreements, there have been nine agree-

### Supply

ments in Newfoundland for a total of \$235 million. In Prince Edward Island, there have been 12 agreements for a total of \$103 million in federal contributions. In Nova Scotia, there have been eight agreements for a total of \$140 million. In New Brunswick, there have been eight agreements for a total of \$195 million. That comes to 37 agreements for a total of \$673.3 million in federal contribution, and yet my friend opposite says we have abandoned Atlantic Canada.

**Mr. Tobin:** Mr. Speaker, it is tragic to realize that one can take a rookie Member of Parliament, give him a car and a chauffeur, and call him a Minister. He arrives in this Chamber and begins to sound like the perennial parrot repeating the lines written by the bureaucracy which represents the interests and the market-place mentality being put forward as by this administration. That is not only tragic, it is disappointing when one listens to responsible voices in Atlantic Canada, including the voices of—I nearly choke on the words—four Progressive Conservative Premiers now elected in Atlantic Canada to the Chamber of Commerce to the Transportation Commission and to the Economic Council of the Atlantic provinces. We listen to all those voices commenting on the direction taken by this Government in abandoning the regional development policy and abandoning the tools which allow an area of high disparity to develop. After listening to those words, the Minister opposite appears to be like a speck in a snowstorm, blowing against the wind and, like a speck in a snowstorm, I predict he shall be buried come the next election.

In prefacing my question, I want to say to the Minister that Hon. Members on this side are not asking today that a magic wand be waved and that A.B.C. directives be followed and all will be well, prosperous and floating in the fat of the land. As the Minister said, it is not that simple and it is not what we are suggesting. Hon. Members opposite, by the way, Mr. Speaker, are not suggesting we were floating in the fat of the land previous to the last election. We understand and recognize we were not. We do not make any other case. What we are saying is that there is the philosophy that everyone, no matter where he or she lives in this country, has a right at least to equal opportunity—and only opportunity and not guarantees—to develop their full potential, and that those kind of programs which provided access to opportunity ought not to be destroyed. That is what we are saying and the Minister has failed to come to grips with that.

Could the Minister tell us whether he has heard the voice of the Premier of Newfoundland, Premier Peckford, a Progressive Conservative; the voice of Premier Lee of Prince Edward Island, a Progressive Conservative; the voice of Premier Hatfield of New Brunswick, a Progressive Conservative, and the voice of Premier Buchanan of Nova Scotia, a Progressive Conservative, all of whom have said that the projected cuts in transfer payments are in essence a transfer of the federal deficit on to the backs of provincial Governments? And if that occurs, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) insists that it will, we are going to see a reduction in education, which provides our young people with the ability to go out and compete in the market-place, and hospital care for our people.