

Adjournment Debates

advisory and a supervisory capacity. It should be possible to establish a risk capital, or venture capital, division for the IDB using DREE funds. This should be looked into since IDB already has regional organizations, considerable expertise in business practice and advisory capabilities; and with the IDB being used in an advisory capacity there is less chance of conflict of interest situations arising.

A new emphasis on massive infrastructure programs for strategic areas must be considered. Infrastructure developments such as roads, port facilities, etc., are tangible assets and remain reasonably permanent inducements and advantages to potential investors, unlike grants which are subject to the vagaries of policy changes, of which this department is a particularly good example.

In summary, there is still a great need for the minister to inform the Canadian public what the new policies of his department are going to involve. I trust that we will not have to wait much longer for a comprehensive announcement in this regard.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to offer my personal congratulations to the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay) on assuming the responsibility of regional economic expansion critic for his party in the House of Commons. I am, of course, very pleased to respond to the question which he put to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson) on January 11 and which he has presented in greater detail this evening.

Specifically, the question relates to the release of information concerning incentive grants from DREE to business or private companies which were offered but which were subsequently withdrawn. The minister in his reply referred briefly to the difficulty of determining accurately on a projection basis jobs which may be created when companies are made an offer of assistance. Certainly, in making public these offers the department refers to them specifically as offers. Rates relating to capital costs, the expenditure per job and other relative statistics are disclosed. I think this is a desirable objective.

Mr. Speaker, each offer is subject to conditions specified in the Regional Development Incentives Act. Therefore, there are instances where the applicant may decide for his own reasons not to proceed. But, more important, there are instances where the department is required to withdraw an offer because the company has not lived up to the conditions. This is a measure of protection to the public purse and it is the reason for publishing and distributing monthly reports to parliament containing summary statistics sections on figures of total capital costs, incentives and expected employment of those offers which were subsequently withdrawn and declined.

In respect of explaining the decentralization policy announced by the minister, which was not the subject of the question raised by the hon. member, I am sure that in the very near future we will have an opportunity to elaborate on this new policy of decentralization. Also, so far as the new policy of the department is concerned, I am sure we will have occasion to work very closely with other interested members. I am sure, also, from the question

asked by the hon. member for Central Nova, that he is interested in DREE programs. We are all interested, as is evident from questions and suggestions such as those of the hon. member. I am sure DREE will be a good program and that the Department of Regional Economic Expansion will serve its purpose in helping the non-developed areas of this country.

**NORTHERN AFFAIRS—NORTHWEST TERRITORIES—
MAINTENANCE OF EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIANS AND
CLEARING OF RIGHT OF WAY**

Mr. Walter Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments about the Hire North project which involves a group of labourers working under the able leadership of Rudy Steiner out of Hay River. These people work on the clearing of the right of way over a stretch of highway between Fort Simpson and Camsell Bend, a distance of approximately 50 miles.

A few weeks ago I was concerned, in respect of the Hire North project, that it would turn into a "fire north project" as some people were being laid off. I am now informed that many people are going back to work, although not necessarily on the Hire North project. These people originally worked mainly with hand tools on a 49 or 50-mile stretch; they were three months ahead of schedule and therefore worked their way out of work. The people employed on the job were northern natives who were very proud of the work they were doing, and justly so.

• (2210)

I am sure that given the time, the money and some equipment the native peoples of the Northwest Territories can build that highway from Fort Simpson to Tuktoyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean. These people are very proud of the work they have been doing, and they have been doing very careful work because it is in a part of the country which they know best. Many of them are familiar with the bush and are well trained to look after themselves in the bush. I should like to make it very clear that I and the people who are on the project know very well that they can build this highway themselves using common sense and northern experience.

I will be very brief, Mr. Speaker, in asking some very important questions of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Marchand). Let me point out that it seems a little ironical to me, or perhaps somewhat strange, that a Metis on this side of the House should be asking a question of an Indian on the other side of the House.

The first question is: On what section of the clearing of the right of way will Hire North be allowed to proceed with the work, and could this information be passed along to Hire North as soon as possible?

My second question is: How much money will Hire North be allowed for the vocational training part of the project, and could this information also be passed along to Hire North as soon as possible? This information is most important as Hire North will have to obtain some equipment on the site to carry out this training program