

Regional Development Incentives Act

occasions he made it a condition of the contract that 10 per cent, 15 per cent or 20 per cent of the employees had to be residents of the areas in which the project was being undertaken.

Members of Parliament should seriously consider this matter. If we are to try to help a given area to expand and achieve a high degree of economic growth, we must consider the employment picture that will be created. If employees are imported into such areas the purpose of the bill will not be fulfilled; auxiliary services and industry that would be created by the establishment of the main project will not come to fruition.

I hope the minister will seriously consider this exceedingly difficult problem. He has a great deal of knowledge of the problem caused by the complications of union jurisdiction in connection with this type of project. People employed in skilled trades in northern Quebec and northern Ontario have not had the opportunity to join unions, particularly craft unions, and in many instances when a contract is signed in the initial stages of development it prohibits local people being employed and workers are brought in from other areas. I have found that when the unemployment insurance offices and manpower centres have co-operated they have been able to exercise influence on contractors, sub-contractors and many of the craft unions to eliminate what would otherwise become an exceedingly difficult political problem and often a difficult and insoluble community problem.

Because of the minister's experience, he should be aware of the problem and willing to accept this type of amendment. It may be that he can suggest an amendment which would have the same effect as this one. He should be willing to accept this kind of proposition, whether it is put in this form or some other. I strongly urge the minister to accept the amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Burton: Mr. Speaker, I wish to record my support of the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald). It is a very important amendment if we are to fulfil the purposes of the bill. Once again I should like to refer to the basic intent and purpose of the bill as set out in its title, which is as follows:

An act to provide incentives for the development of productive employment opportunities in

[Mr. Peters.]

regions of Canada determined to require special measures to facilitate economic expansion and social adjustment.

If this purpose and intent are to be achieved, I believe it is very necessary to make a special effort to ensure that people living in a region which is in need of special assistance are able to obtain employment in any industry established in the region. The bill should be designed in a way that will assure this opportunity to local people.

• (12:50 p.m.)

I believe that for this reason the amendment is very useful and would be a good safeguard to put into the bill. The minister is given very wide powers in the bill but, as has been noted, certain limitations, conditions and requirements have also been placed in the legislation. Consequently I think that this requirement would be a useful addition in fulfilling the intent and purpose of the bill.

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, I am most surprised that the minister did not rise to reply and to state his views on the amendment. He is a man who has had wide experience in union and labour work, a man who has compassion for his fellow men, and here we have an amendment put forward by a sincere and dedicated member of the house which indicates his concern with regard to the implementation of the bill. I ask the minister to rise in his place and give his views on this important matter.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, what this amendment does is to ask that I do my job as minister in charge of regional development. The whole purpose of this law is to do exactly what the hon. member is asking—to create more employment and greater local opportunities. Therefore, all the amendment of the hon. member does is to ensure that I do my job. But this is the purpose of the proposed law. My objection to the amendment is that at best it is redundant and, indeed, by confusing the issue it could make the legislation less effective in fulfilling the purpose toward which the hon. member is aiming.

I think we both agree on the principle and objective of the bill. What will we do if, when the bill is passed by the house, we find that before we can give any incentives to employers the law imposes a condition on them? That is the purpose of the amendment. If this is stated in general terms in the bill,