

Supply

I want to take as a text for making these remarks a very erroneous statement made by the member of Parliament for Kenora—Rainy River who slammed the federal budget, as the *Kenora Daily Miner* states. The member said that the budget will seriously erode business opportunities in northwestern Ontario. He implied that the future of FEDNOR was bleak. There were even some comments from members of his party to the effect that FEDNOR was going to cease operations.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, FEDNOR has gone from success to success. It has made an immense contribution in northern Ontario, a contribution which is micro by micro as opposed to just a big macro splash. It has affected dozens and dozens of different communities by helping the small business sector in those communities.

I have some numbers which I really think I should introduce before I take a few minutes to explain what the program is doing. I will have to do that because of what I have heard this morning when there was a lot of erroneous information about what FEDNOR ought to do.

There have been 323 projects approved by FEDNOR since its inception. There has been over \$22 million in federal assistance and almost 2,000 jobs have been created. This is an expenditure which in a city, for example, of 10 million people might not be noticed. But in northern Ontario where the population is a little over 800,000, the vast majority of enterprise is small business, this is a very significant contribution.

This program has been chaired by the king of northern Ontario, Leo Bernier, a former minister in the provincial government of Ontario for many years, who understands the north very well and who is sitting beside the clock up here, Madam Speaker. He might even wave to you.

He has worked very, very hard for northern Ontario for decades. He has done a careful, perceptive job in making sure that FEDNOR is understood and that it is accessible to the small business community in northern Ontario.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hockin: Before I go to just any kind of dry description of what FEDNOR is, I have to tell you one of the proudest moments I have had as a minister was going

to North Bay just a few months ago to announce the opening, with the very significant help of FEDNOR, of Mirolin Industries. Let me just tell you something about that announcement.

Mr. Mills: Was it a joint announcement with the member?

Mr. Hockin: Yes, the member was there, and he was delighted. Instead of sitting behind the hon. member opposite he was with me that day in North Bay. This announcement was typical of what we are trying to do in northern Ontario.

There was a company operating in the suburbs of Toronto and it had to expand. It had three or four problems with expanding there. One was the cost of property. Another was getting clearance on a railway siding which was absolutely crucial for the success of this company. The other was to get expertise and labour with a good work ethic and prompt response to the company's ads for labour. Of course, the company had to build the facility in good time at a good price.

It found that it was very difficult to accomplish that in its existing location. It placed an advertisement in the North Bay newspaper, advertising these jobs that might be available. It received over 600 excellent responses from educated, hardworking people who wanted to work for this company. It found a good property on the railway and together with help from FEDNOR and the province, which helped with a loan guarantee, we suddenly were able to make an announcement of 319 new jobs being created in North Bay.

I want to say something else which is very important to my hon. friends opposite. That particular program is typical of most of the programs that FEDNOR has pursued. We did it in co-operation with the provincial government of Ontario. This has not been a program where there has been tremendous rivalry between the provincial government of Ontario and the federal government of Canada. In fact, it has been very co-operative. There have not been games played.

I am frequently with the ministers René Fontaine or David Ramsay making these announcements. It is the same taxpayer that is paying for this. It is the same taxpayer in northern Ontario who will benefit from it, and we have worked together. I say this to the member for Kenora—Rainy River. We have worked together very well with the provinces. It is not right to overlook that,