

Regional Development Incentives Act

• (5:10 p.m.)

Mr. O'Connell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I feel I should bring to Your Honour's attention the fact that the debate concerns the production of certain papers. The hon. member has, himself, noted that the papers do not exist, and I really wonder whether a debate ought to be permitted on a subject which is outside the scope of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): May I suggest to the hon. member that he attempts to make his remarks as relevant as possible to the debate?

Mr. Burton: I will certainly do that, Mr. Speaker. I was attempting to explain why I was seeking this information—the reasons for the concern which led me to bring this motion before the House and ask for whatever correspondence did exist. We did hear a statement by the Parliamentary Secretary (Mr. O'Connell) and I will be interested in any further explanations he may have to give when he takes part in the debate.

I wish to say this in conclusion. Yesterday we heard an announcement by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion with respect to the establishment of 22 special areas across Canada. As far as I am concerned, I welcome the inclusion of the cities of Regina and Saskatoon as well as an area of northwestern Saskatchewan within this program. Questions need to be answered as to the scope of the program envisaged in this regard. Will it be restricted to a few areas of emphasis, as suggested in the minister's announcement, or will its application to areas such as the Saskatchewan communities involved be as broad as was foreseen in the over-all program? We ought to keep in mind the need for an over-all program of massive assistance for the Saskatchewan economy, realizing that the economy of Saskatchewan plays an extremely important role within the whole national framework.

At the present time we are confronted by the lift program—the letters standing for "lower inventory for tomorrow"—as announced by the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. This is bound to have a serious impact on the income of Saskatoon people in the coming year. We very much need a program initiated by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to offset the effects of the other programs which adversely affect the province. In fact, the entire province of Saskatchewan should be established as a designated area. This is only fair when one com-

[Mr. Burton.]

pares the situation in Saskatchewan with that in Manitoba where the entire southern settled region is included as a designated area under the regional development incentives plan, in addition to some of the northern region which is now included as a special area. I have no objection to these boundaries having been chosen, but in justice I believe similar treatment should be accorded to Saskatchewan.

We need extensive public works programs in the province. We certainly need special help in programs of the department to assist the Indian and Métis people. I was pleased to hear the minister announce yesterday that help would be extended to the Indians and Métis in northwestern Saskatchewan. I was glad to note he has adopted some of the proposals made by the hon. members for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) and Skeena (Mr. Howard). They recently made a tour of this area and recommended that certain programs be carried out. I might also say, to their credit, that they carried out their tour of inspection in a much more tasteful and sensitive manner than did some others who recently investigated the social and economic problems of the area.

Earlier, when this question was placed before the House, it was suggested that no correspondence along the lines sought for in the motion did, in fact, exist. I am astounded to think that so little consultation took place with respect to the establishment of designated areas in Saskatchewan that there should not be one scrap of correspondence or one document which could be tabled in answer to my request for papers. I would be interested to hear more about this aspect from the Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): I rise to take part in this debate on the production of papers. May I at the outset—

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am surprised that the Parliamentary Secretary should not have been given an opportunity to reply to the observations which were made by the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton). It would appear there are no papers and, in these circumstances, it would seem to me that the Parliamentary Secretary should at least be given the opportunity to say so.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. The chair has recognized the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom).