

In making that comment, I am not suggesting that the Hon. Member for Cariboo—Chilcotin was saying that one has to use political influence in order to obtain financial support through the Western Diversification Office. I believe the principle of western diversification is a good one. It is one that we need to develop and expand upon in the future. I want to be a part of any process that will develop a business plan for western Canada for use by the Western Diversification Office.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer):** The Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields), on questions or comments.

**Mr. Shields:** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to have the opportunity to put some questions to the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), who quoted extensively from the submission of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I should point out, however, that that submission was made to the Minister responsible for western diversification prior to Bill C-113 being tabled in the House of Commons.

**An Hon. Member:** Come on, Jack! How can you stand there and not blush!

**Mr. Shields:** The NDP continually refer to that submission, and certainly the Canadian Federation of Independent Business was expressing concerns that it might have with the legislation, though it did so prior to the legislation being printed and tabled in the House.

The Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap has some question in relation to the funding provided for a potash market study, a soil erosion study, as well as funding for a pulp mill.

In answer, I point out to the Hon. Member—and it is something, I am sure, he already knows—that that funding took place under programs in existence prior to the western economic diversification legislation being tabled. The Minister gathered, under the Department of Western Economic Diversification, those programs that were available to him, and it was under those programs that that funding took place.

● (1340)

The Hon. Member was pointing out that there was no plan in the terms of reference of the Bill. Perhaps he has a copy of the legislation before him. If he does not, I could probably get one of the Pages to bring him a copy so that he could read it with me.

Clause 6 (1) reads:

6. The Minister may

- (a) formulate plans and integrate strategies to support development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada;
- (b) oversee the implementation of programs and projects in pursuance of plans and strategies referred to in paragraph (a) and, where those programs and projects will not be undertaken by another Minister or department or agency of the Government of Canada, initiate or implement those programs and projects;

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(c) plan, direct, manage and implement programs and projects intended to contribute directly or indirectly to

(i) the establishment, development, support and promotion of enterprises, and more particularly, small and medium-sized enterprises, in Western Canada—

It goes on and on to outline the kind of points to which the Hon. Member referred dealing with clear directions. My caviar socialist from Kamloops—Shuswap is only making political hay in an attempt to delay this legislation, and that is all.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I have studied the legislation carefully. As a matter of fact, I have almost committed it to memory by now. That is why I am so perplexed about why the request of the Thompson Nicola Manufacturers Association was rejected.

Since my hon. friend from Athabasca has obviously taken such an interest in this fund, perhaps I could ask him as a representative of the Government to look into the matter and to explain why this request for \$40,000 was rejected. I am asking these kinds of questions because I know of other initiatives that were funded.

**Mr. Shields:** Because it doesn't fit any program until this legislation is passed. Is that clear?

**Mr. Riis:** If he will let me speak, I want to tell my honest friend that in August of 1987, the Government announced that it planned to introduce the Western Diversification Office. This is now 10 months later. Where was the legislation for month after month?

If the Government really did care about doing something for the diversification of the western economy, it could have done something in the previous 10 months. I do not want to sit here and take flack from an individual who says that we are holding up the legislation. I have said that we support the legislation.

The Government sat on its hands for nearly a year after it announced this legislation. If it were serious about the diversification of the western economy, it would have acted on this months ago. To tell the Opposition that to take an extra few hours of debate will somehow hold up the legislation is absolutely silly.

**Mr. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields) keeps asking the same question even though it has been answered several times. He claims that a small firm in Edmonton had made an application which had been turned down because this legislation has not been passed. Yet we have put on the record this morning various examples of projects that have been given the okay including that of a big Japanese firm which wants to build a pulp mill. The millions are there for them, but small business is being told that it cannot get any because the legislation has not passed. What sort of nonsense is this? I sure hope that the Hon. Member for Athabasca will stand in his place and for once be honest with the people of Canada and particularly the people of western Canada.