

Saskatchewan dam. Many of us were very much disturbed by the boundaries that were established.

I subsequently corresponded with the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand). I asked him in particular to include the major cities of the province. I did so, not because I have anything against the inclusion of the smaller centres in the province—I think a very sound case can be made for the inclusion of them—but if any meaningful growth is to be carried out in the province of Saskatchewan it is absolutely necessary to include the major growth centres in the province within the program.

On this basis, I suggested that Regina and Saskatoon should be included in the program. In fact, I suggested the entire province of Saskatchewan should be established as a designated area in view of the economic conditions in that province. I followed up my exchange of correspondence with the minister by placing questions on the Order Paper when the session of the House commenced on October 23. I received some very evasive answers. When I asked what criteria were used by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion in the selection of designated areas for each province, the answer provided to each question was, weighted measures of representation of economic growth (employment, income and population) and of potential for secondary industry. I suggest that this wording and answer was a clear case of bureaucratic gobbledegook.

I followed this question up with a motion for papers asking for correspondence between the federal government and the governments of the various provinces regarding the consultations that took place prior to the establishment of the designated areas across Canada. I was very much astonished and surprised to learn, in response to my motion, that there was no correspondence with any province except the province of Alberta.

I was supplied with information on the exchange of correspondence between the federal government and the province of Alberta. It was clearly set out in this correspondence just what proposals were made by the federal government and what proposals were made by the province of Alberta. I found that all of the other consultations that were carried on, I might say consultations which are provided for under the legislation, were carried on through what seem to be rather informal discussions. When I attempted to obtain some details of the proposals that were discussed, I

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was told that the details of such consultations were confidential, except for the information that had been supplied with respect to the province of Alberta.

It is then that I transferred the motion for debate with respect to correspondence between the federal government and the province of Saskatchewan and this is the motion that is now being debated, Mr. Speaker. Further questions were asked regarding the criteria. I tried to obtain more information on what sort of criteria were used in establishing the designated areas across Canada. I obtained a rather vague set of figures dealing with each of the 64 geographic economic regions across Canada.

Subsequently, I privately asked for a map that set out the boundaries of these various regions. The Parliamentary Secretary was kind enough to supply me with such a map. When an analysis was carried out, it was quite clear that on the basis of the information supplied in response to this request there was no meaningful criteria applied in establishing the designated areas across Canada. Indeed, it amounted to little more than an exercise in political manoeuvring which did not take into account the real needs that should have been dealt with under the terms and objectives of the legislation for which the Department of Regional Economic Expansion is responsible.

In discussing the programs of that department over the past year, the government has made a case that this is their major program to decrease and eliminate regional economic disparities in Canada. It is a major weapon in dealing with the government's war on poverty. As a result of some of the information that has been supplied, some very serious questions need to be asked about the adequacy of the programs that are being developed by the government. Indeed, we have very serious questions with respect to the application of those programs in the province of Saskatchewan. I do not need to go into detail concerning the state of the Saskatchewan economy at the present time. Whether we look at income, retail sales or investment, we are confronted with a gloomy picture. There has been a distinct decline in population over the past one and a half years. Between October, 1968 and January 1, 1970, the population declined from 962,000 to 948,000. This is a matter which requires urgent public consideration.