

*Federal Business Development Bank Act*

steps must be taken to plug the loophole in the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, while we in the Conservative party support Bill C-14, it is not the complete answer for assistance to business in Canada. The government also has a responsibility to restore the work ethic in Canada.

**Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to speak on Bill C-14 and to express support for what I think is an outstanding bill, in view of some of the tremendous merits it envisions for small industries and small businesses. The government should be justly proud of the Federal Business Development Bank. This bill will help Canadians to extend their imaginations well into the market place. It is a bill with a particular emphasis on small business and developments, and is an attempt to act into law a philosophy that is long overdue.

● (2120)

This is a philosophy which says to every Canadian: "You are someone who counts; you are someone who matters". This philosophy says to the Canadian people: "Go ahead and dream, and the government will give support". I find it very easy to lend support to this bill because it is a bill that is steeped in Conservative thinking. It is the kind of thing which says that the individual matters. It is the kind of thing which places the individual in the forefront as he should be.

This is a sharp demarkation and departure from the traditional system of taxing people so that the government can think up and execute its ideas. I might submit that execution is what usually comes from dreams by big government under its own implementation. This is a great bill because the people of Canada become the thinkers and doers, and the government does what it must do. They all play a supportive role. This bill challenges people to seek the maximums of their potential. That situation is as it should be.

While I wholeheartedly support this bill I wish to take a few moments to outline a caution, to which I think we should lend particular attention. I say this with all due awareness that there is a regional advisory system or council set up to help administer this bill. The special concern I suggest is that we must be very attentive to the sparsely populated areas of this country. I would hope there is special concern not only for small business but for the sparsely populated areas.

In the first century of Canada's federated existence its rural and urban population ratios have completely reversed. One hundred years ago 80 per cent of Canadians lived in rural areas. Today over 80 per cent of Canadians live in urban areas. It is predicted that 95 per cent of all Canadians will be living in urban centres by the year 2000. If there is something that is obvious it is that government must bear the brunt of the responsibility for the fact that a large proportion of this country's population has been crammed and crowded into a few large cities.

Past policies of the two highest levels of government have had a tremendous influence on the rural exodus. To lend documentation to that, I point out that in the single decade from 1961 to 1971 over 179,000 people left the rural

communities on the prairies. That means that in only ten years almost 200,000 people have vanished from those areas. I request that through this bill there be a real thrust to decentralize Canada. This means special help for the rural communities. They have, however, a serious handicap.

In some of the major cities of the country there are whole office staffs set up to assist the cities in obtaining assistance from the provincial and federal governments. The small towns throughout the country do not have that kind of staff. They operate with part-time mayors who hold other jobs. The way in which they can make application for and attract small businesses does not have such a degree of sophistication, and so I believe it becomes important that very special attention be paid to the small and rural communities.

A few years ago we heard the slogan that the land is strong. In the context that that slogan was used its real meaning was that people are strong. But I submit that there cannot be a concept of a strong land that is devoid of people. All across the prairies we see a mass exodus of people from the rural districts. The land is not strong if it does not have people. Small businesses and industries in those areas must have the kind of thrust that is extra-projected within the scope of this legislation.

We cannot afford to continue to lose 200,000 people within a single decade from the rural areas. That simply is too many. It is well for those who have driven across the prairies to note the number of dying towns. The fact remains that how they were set up caused them to be placed too closely together. Largely they were established under the historical notion that towns were far enough apart if one could load a sleigh with grain, drive into town in the middle of winter and be back home again before dark. That placed them at something like six to nine miles apart.

We who have seen these towns die know it is not a death that came about through suicide, or lack of desire, or lack of spirit on the part of the people in them. It is instead murder by technology and a murder by government which through its policies, caused the development of this country to be centralized in five major locations or five major cities. We must pay special attention to rural communities throughout the breadth and scope of this country.

There is a myth which exists in western culture that bigness is goodness. It is the kind of myth which we must do everything we can to end. If we take a look at the large cities in this North American continent we will note that almost everything associated with bigness, in terms of the size of cities, tends also to perpetuate negative behaviour. There are many things which exist in such a society which cause people to go to institutions because of negative behaviour. The growing ratio in this regard is faster than the growth in the size of the cities.

Rural people, of course, are no better than city people. I submit, however, they are just as good. The rural way of life is something which must be protected and not allowed to vanish from the Canadian scene. If the land is to be strong it must be a land from sea to sea, which means people from sea to sea, which means support for growth and industrial development all across the country. Canada cannot be allowed to go along as a malignant growth

[Mr. McKenzie.]