

Supply

agree with it. I heard his speech and I think he was very sincere in what he said.

• (1300)

Nevertheless, we in northern Ontario have been waiting 25 or 30 years for direct assistance from both Tory and Liberal governments. We believe that DRIE, MAGI, ACOA and FEDNOR are just acronyms and euphemisms for doing nothing. That is what the people from northern Ontario feel about both governments that have been in power. It is a forgotten area, along with eastern Canada and sections of western Canada.

We talk about the Community Futures Program, grandiose announcements, and its millions of dollars. After investigation, there are so many hoops to go through with community futures that most applicants—and 10 per cent of them are approved eventually—get so frustrated with the various hoops of getting approval in northern Ontario, getting approval in Toronto, and getting approval in Ottawa, and then, with a snap of a finger, the application may be turned down. As a result, people become frustrated. I am glad to say that we got the people together in Ottawa and asked if the government understands what is going on. We have had to restructure the whole program.

The minister is a good man, and I think he cares. But he is lost as to what is happening out there. The minister has to get out there into these areas to see the reality of the situation. It is best to cite a current example as to what is going on.

We all remember the FBDB scare with the funding of strip clubs across the country in the amount of \$17 million going to 38 strip clubs. The reaction of the government to that is that it has to be extremely careful. It has reacted on the radical side of things. There was one application to FEDNOR and FBDB to have moneys for reconstruction and renovation of a hotel or motel in my constituency. Last year the hotel had one program which might have been called, perhaps, not appropriate. Both funding agencies state that their programs are being reviewed and anything sexually explicit or exploitive will no longer be considered. It is another way of saying that they are cutting off funds. I have been asked to write letters stating that this particular application will not endanger the moral fabric of my community. It is

absolutely laughable. I am wondering if the agency should be concerned about impure thoughts.

I want to ask the minister if there is one positive thing he feels his government is going to do for northern Ontario that does not have all these strings attached and all these hoops that we have to go through? Is there one positive initiative about which he can say: "Here you are, here are some funds, deal with it"?

Mr. MacKay: Madam Speaker, I gather what my colleague opposite is asking for is a heavier emphasis on grants, outright contributions. We are doing this to some extent in Atlantic Canada in recognition of the fact that in some cases it is appropriate to do so. It may be appropriate to look at this policy in northern Ontario, but that is something that my colleague responsible for that agency can consider. The member can make those representations to him.

The member makes the point which I tried to make, however, that there is that kind of flexibility. If, in fact, that is a good thing to do, then it is possible to do it. Should the Western Diversification Agency decide that it wishes to take a different approach in developing their economy, it can do that too.

I know that there is a temptation—and those of us from disadvantaged regions are often subject to it—to give as much money as one can to every possible enterprise that seems to have merit. Again I hate to resort to clichés, but any government that is big enough to give you all you want, eventually is big enough to take all you have. There has to be a happy medium.

The most positive thing we have done in regional development policy is to bring in that element of flexibility so that members opposite, like my hon. friend, can make their voices heard and the possibility is there to give effect to what they wish to do.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, I have to first thank the minister for his kind words of what is becoming a dim memory for me, the leadership campaign of last year. It is a memory which undoubtedly will grow rosier as it grows dimmer.

The minister talked about white elephants. I think that the approach of the government to regional development is based, not on white elephants, but pink elephants. There is an expectation and belief that somewhere over the rainbow there is going to come this