

*Manpower and Immigration Council*

The hon. member asked about the provision for and guarantee of some kind of close parliamentary, financial supervision over the work, operations and expenditures of this new council.

One infers from the remarks of the minister a few moments ago that the four advisory boards being established under the new council—perhaps there will be more than four; I know that part II of the legislation provides for the establishment of additional boards—will in fact be responsible at some stage of their annual operations for making their expenditures known and available to the scrutiny of this house. But the point of the question of the hon. member for Halifax, I believe, was that the over-all council that is being established by this legislation is the agency that should be responsible for making such a report.

● (4:30 p.m.)

Our suggestion, which was contained in the remarks of the hon. member for Halifax, is not that the four advisory boards report to parliament but that the council itself report annually to parliament. The council itself should be required to table its report in the house annually so that strict financial and supervisory control by the members of this house and the people of Canada over the expenditures of this new agency is possible. The people of Canada want to know where their money is being spent today, a fact that I should not think needed underlining in wake of the recent report of the Economic Council of Canada.

This, Mr. Speaker, was the essence of the appeal that was made by the hon. member for Halifax a few moments ago and which I feel has perhaps escaped the attention of the minister. I know that all members on this side of the house, or at least the members of this party, will welcome an answer to this question before we move beyond this stage of the proceedings on this legislation.

I think I am quoting the minister correctly, albeit rather loosely, when I say that he said that the entire program envisioned under this legislation will be linked to the employment needs of the country. This is a welcome announcement. However, I wonder whether the program will be linked even further to the social and economic aspirations of this country. In my view and in the view of many of us it would be helpful, and indeed very reassuring, if some provision could be made which would guarantee a kind of regional representation on this new Canada manpower and immigration council, a provision which

[Mr. Sherman.]

would guarantee that various regions of this country which at this time feel that they do not share equitably in immigration and in industrial productivity exercises and operations could aspire to a fair and equitable share of the progress that will no doubt be accomplished nationally in this country in the next few years.

This is not the first time in remarks I have made in this chamber that I have referred to the inequity of regional development in this country, to the fact that various parts of the country are given the opportunity, inadvertently or by design, to benefit to a greater degree economically and socially than other regions such as the prairie region which I represent and regions in the maritime provinces. Therefore I would urge that careful attention be paid to this aspect of Canadian life, both economic and social. I would urge that this new council or agency be specifically charged with the responsibility of obtaining and attaining for itself a fair and equitable geographic representation across the country.

I further urge that some attention be given to extremely close consultation between the new council and the various departments of industry in the provinces of this land, with a view to promoting industrial and economic well-being in individual provinces and regions.

The minister has said that the program is linked to the employment needs of the country. I suggest that the employment needs of the country cannot always be interpreted in surface terms or on the basis of job opportunities which are available or are lacking at the specific time of examination. There are certain known needs in this country. There is a very serious and urgent need for attention to be given to the lagging productivities and economies of specific regions which have not shared so far to their fullest potential in their just desserts and in the prosperity of the country at large.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that when the members of the council and of these advisory committees are concerning themselves with the manpower, employment and immigration problems in a given community or region, they could also take into account the future requirements and the future hopes and aspirations of that region. This can only be done if they work in close consultation with, as I have suggested, the department of industry in the province concerned. I do not think it is too much to hope in this day and age of enlightenment in Canada, this age of progress and relative prosperity, that we can think