

Oral Questions

[Translation]

I shall recognize the hon. member for Témiscamingue in a moment. I think we should allow the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi to state his question and allow the minister to reply in peace, silence and order. The hon. member for Témiscamingue on a point of order.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi has just said that half the projects were accepted.

Mr. Grafftey: No, this is not what I said.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Half those of last year.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We could proceed faster if we allowed the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi to ask his question.

Mr. Grafftey: Mr. Speaker, I wish to repeat my question.

The citizens of my constituency want to know whether the local initiative program is a political project or an actual project to reduce unemployment during the winter months. This is a serious question at the present time.

[English]

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, it would be my desire to approve every project that merits it, but that is impossible in view of the number of applications we have received for which money is available. I am very sympathetic with the hon. member and if he will send me the details of the situation I shall do my best to reply. However, I rather doubt that we can hold out any hope that any member is going to get all his projects approved.

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—SUGGESTED INCREASE IN FUNDS

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that of the 10,000 projects, many of which will have to be rejected, many are identical with those that have been accepted and will be rejected because of the shortage of funds, can the minister tell the House whether he has approached his cabinet colleagues for an increase in funding for this program, whether a decision will be made shortly, and when we can expect an announcement?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have not formally approached my cabinet colleagues on this matter but I think any further announcement of that order would probably be forthcoming when the Minister of Finance announces his budget.

Mr. Lundrigan: In view of the fact we are almost at the end of January in terms of decision-making under this program, can the minister give any indication when we can expect that kind of decision by the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I think I would leave the announcement of the date of the budget to the Minister of Finance.

[Mr. Speaker.]

While I am on my feet I should like to make an appeal to all hon. members about a program I think is important but which is not receiving the attention we would like. I refer to the on-the-job training program. Subscriptions to this are not moving as quickly as I would like to see; yet it is recognized as one of the best that we have—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—APPROVAL OF PROJECTS AND ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Since a very small number of projects had been accepted more than a month ago and that, in respect of some of them the government has not yet paid a cent, can the minister tell us if it is a directive from his department?

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would really need the details of the specific cases to which the hon. member is referring. If he would be kind enough to send them to me I shall do my best to render the necessary service.

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—DEADLINE FOR PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. In view of the fact that in the House last week or the week before the minister said that the deadline for processing applications was January 19, tomorrow, and that there are many applications still in his office, is there a new deadline or is tomorrow still the date?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am holding my breath and hoping that by tomorrow we will have the applications processed. It may be that I shall have to seek the indulgence of the House to extend it by a day or two but I do not know yet.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. As the minister has indicated that the deadline is tomorrow, may I ask him if he will discontinue the practice of consulting with his colleagues with respect to approval as this smells of political patronage?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe in a moment for a supplementary. I had given an undertaking that we would return to the original question as I believe