

Supply

Mr. Axworthy: I am reminded by my colleague who asked, what about the zigzagging and the broken promises on Petro-Canada, Jerusalem or other commitments of which the Conservative Party is so proud?

Mr. McMillan: What about wage and price controls?

Mr. Axworthy: Here is the Leader of the Opposition, standing there with all his crocodile tears pouring down his face in great gushes, crying about the high unemployment rate, conveniently forgetting that when he was Prime Minister the unemployment rate in this country was 8.5 per cent, which is .2 per cent higher than it is today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: I say this only to point out that if we are going to debate the issue of unemployment, let us debate it on the grounds of serious, thoughtful and creative proposals, not under the mythology or the storm created by the Leader of the Opposition who has offered not one constructive proposal of his own.

An hon. Member: More Liberal deceit.

Mr. Axworthy: Did anyone in the House hear the Leader of the Opposition make one constructive proposal?

Some hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Axworthy: Did we hear the Leader of the Opposition make any proposal that would make any difference?

Some hon. Members: No.

An hon. Member: Throw out the Liberals.

Mr. Axworthy: All we heard was an appeal to the Liberals to support him, to steal Liberal ideas and talk about broken promises, for which he set a world record which can never be broken.

An hon. Member: Read the motion.

Mr. Rossi: This government is going to vote against it. His own caucus does not want him. He is trying to fight for a new convention in January. He will not be there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I understand that today is Friday and it is sometimes customary to get a little out of hand. However, it is very difficult for the *Hansard* reporters and the translators to hear the member who is recognized. I would invite hon. members to respect those who are recognized to take part in the debate. Right now it is the hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration who has been recognized.

Mr. Axworthy: I may say, Mr. Speaker, that after listening to the Leader of the Opposition, it reminds me of a statement made by Winston Churchill about another leader of the opposition. He said that the leader of the opposition had only one idea in his life and that was a bad one. I am not sure I can

even give this Leader of the Opposition that much credit. It would probably be overly generous in the circumstances.

The fact is that if we are going to debate these serious economic issues, we must look at the reality of what is taking place in Canada. We must talk about the measures being taken to help Canadians. If members opposite want to criticize or make comment on these measures, that is fair game. But I think it does a great disservice and is a serious act of irresponsibility for the Leader of the Opposition to stand up and paint this picture that there is a total absence of policy, when he knows full well the kind of initiatives we have taken to create employment in Canada.

If he does not know, Mr. Speaker, I will take a moment to remind him. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that our government has created over 100,000 jobs in this fiscal year.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: We have done this through direct employment measures. Let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that these were programs which we had to reintroduce because his government cancelled them.

An hon. Member: Tell that to the auto workers in Oshawa.

Mr. Axworthy: He asked members of the House what was happening in their ridings. I can tell him that what is happening is that people are being put to work in community development projects to fix wharves and fish ladders; people are being put to work in community centres—

Mr. Shields: How much money are you putting into it?

Mr. Axworthy: I will tell the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields) that well over \$2 million is going into his riding to create work.

We will be spending close to \$400 million this year alone on direct employment which will create over 100,000 jobs, involving over 170,000 Canadians. Furthermore, those programs are targeted to those areas with the most serious needs. There are 7,000 participants under the program for the employment of disadvantaged. There are people working in the crisis and rape centres and day care centres because of community service programs. Students are being employed under the new employment program. This is all part of this government's general commitment to provide direct employment programs.

Furthermore, in December we began to bring in special programs to offer new opportunities for Canadian workers to return to work. As of today we have signed 75 work-sharing agreements which have brought over 4,000 workers who were threatened with lay-offs back to their jobs.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: When the Leader of the Opposition talks about lay-offs, he should also talk about the number of people we are putting back into the work force. We are achieving this with the full co-operation of employers, trade unions and government. This shows that our basic commitment to work