

developmental measures for training, work-sharing and job creation. That is why the Minister of Finance has introduced an employment tax credit program.

In excess of \$700 million is being spent in this particular field. It might be argued that we should be spending even more, but I would point out that the money comes from people who are in fact working, people who say, "Do not overspend. Do not create more inflation which would be counterproductive and, in the final analysis, create more unemployment." The amount of money to be used and the direction to be taken are matters of judgment.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McGrath:** My concern and, I believe, the concern of most of us in this House, is for Canadians who are not working. I will put the question this way: Last year job creation lagged behind the growth in the labour force by 129,000. That is straightforward and surely the minister can understand it. It is obvious that government programs are not even keeping up with the growth in the labour force. In these circumstances, does the minister intend to sit back and depend on programs which have demonstrated their inability to keep up with the growth in the work force, or the growth in unemployment, or is he recommending to his cabinet colleagues new programs, for example, public works programs, so as to make an impact upon this problem now?

**An hon. Member:** Same question.

**Mr. Cullen:** It is because of the government's concern over this question that a whole series of new programs has been put in place. What the hon. member is doing is robbing the individuals concerned of any hope that things will get better. I believe the economic growth component of the Canada Works program is a positive step forward. I believe my meetings with the western ministers could be very productive. A whole series of measures is in place, designed to help people for whom my concern is just as great as that of the hon. member.

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● (1427)

#### POST OFFICE

HOME MAIL DELIVERY—ALLEGED CONTRADICTION BETWEEN MINISTER'S STATEMENT AND DEPARTMENTAL PROPOSALS

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Postmaster General. On Monday he said in the House that he had no intention of doing anything which would have a negative effect on home deliveries or on the letter carriers. Can the minister confirm that departmental officials at the most senior level, including the Deputy Postmaster General, are presently considering proposals which would restrict delivery of mail to existing and new homes and, if such proposals are being considered, how does he explain the contradiction with what he said on Monday?

#### Oral Questions

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General):** As the hon. gentleman knows—and I thank him for his question—there are a number of points that need clarification. As he knows, there has been a freeze, in terms of employment and man-years, by government institutions. The Post Office is a government institution and therefore we have been subjected to that freeze. This has meant that in new subdivisions there has been no extension of the letter carrier service.

The first part of the hon. member's question does not address itself specifically to that question but, rather, to the report that has received a great deal of publicity. That report dates back to August of last year. I reiterate that there is no intention at this time to restrict in any way the employment of letter carriers or, indeed, to cut back on the employment of letter carriers in accordance with programs that we have in place.

**Mr. Orlikow:** How does the minister equate what he has just said with one of the objectives of this advisory council, which states:

The project team was asked to produce a mail delivery proposal which offered an alternative to both the current door-to-door delivery system and the alternate day delivery proposal.

It goes on to talk about the possible cutback of 3,000 letter carriers.

**Mr. Blais:** The hon. member understands that in an organization such as the Post Office, which is dynamic and which considers at all times various operations and various methods of providing service to the Canadian public, reports are formulated for the purpose of preparing ourselves for decision-making. That report was done for that purpose. Decisions were taken as of the middle of August last year. I reiterate the statement I made in Toronto last Saturday, that there is no intention of cutting back the letter carriers' service. I repeat what I said then, that no measure will be taken by the Post Office which would have a negative impact on the letter carriers or on any of the work force without full, prior consultation with the employees.

**Mr. Orlikow:** I ask the Postmaster General, since he has indicated there will be no cut in the service which exists at present, when, if ever, the tens of thousands of homes in the new urban areas of Canada which have not had door-to-door mail service because of the freeze can expect to get the same kind of service which other people in the cities of Canada now get?

[Translation]

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, we would like to be able to offer door-to-door service in the near future to all the people who live in these new subdivisions. Unfortunately, as the hon. member knows very well, we have a deficit of more than \$550 million for the current year and, furthermore, we have to deal with the freeze in government expenses, which makes it very difficult for us to beef up the staff in the Post Office.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to be a little bit more patient in this regard so that we might indeed boost our