

company and have also made inquiries of the relevant authorities through our representatives in Texas. I think that is all I can usefully say on the subject at this time.

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NEW EMPLOYMENT EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CREATION OF NATIONAL DEFENCE JOBS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Employment and Immigration about a fraud which is being aided and abetted by his Department. Last week it was announced that under the NEED Program 242 short-term jobs would be created in the Department of National Defence in British Columbia. At the same time, at Victoria dockyards, 54 term employees, some with over three years seniority, were told they would be laid off effective March 31 of this year. Will the Minister personally look into this situation and ensure that this fraud, this injustice, does not continue? Will he ensure that his Department will not destroy full-time jobs in order to create fraudulent statistics about job creation?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is using the word "fraud" in a very loose—and unfortunate way. I think he should perhaps be more careful in the kind of allegations he makes in this House. It is not the purpose of the NEED Program to replace existing workers. A very clear criterion we have under the Program is that any jobs provided are incremental to the normal work force. That is certainly the case in the area of the Defence establishment, and I have had the assurances of my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, that the NEED Program is not replacing jobs that would be ongoing but ones that were under normal term contracts in any event.

REQUEST THAT DOCKYARD LAY-OFF NOTICES BE RESCINDED

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Madam Speaker, I am sure the Canadian people can decide what fraud is, and they will want to look at this pretty carefully.

The base commander has indicated that the jobs being terminated are necessary for the ongoing operation of the dockyards. Taking away one job in order to create several part-time jobs represents a new low, even for this Government. Will the Minister ask the Minister of National Defence to rescind the lay-off notices for the 54 dockyard employees and ensure that the 242 jobs under the NEED Program represent new jobs, not jobs stolen from other workers?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I think, before the Hon. Member gets carried away by his own rhetoric, he should recognize that in this particular case, according to information I have from the Minister of National Defence, there is no replacement with jobs provided under the NEED Program of

jobs that were there under the winter-term operation. Those jobs will be replaced by a further term contract over the summer months. The NEED Program jobs are incremental to both those levels of jobs.

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SHIPBUILDING

FRIGATE PROGRAM—CONSIDERATION SOUGHT FOR NEW BRUNSWICK SHIPYARDS

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Restigouche): Madam Speaker, I would like to return to questions relating to the economy of Atlantic Canada. My question is directed to the Minister of Supply and Services and has to do with the much discussed future employment opportunities at shipyards in Saint John, New Brunswick, under the defence requirements for frigates and new frigate construction. Since this matter is being pursued vigorously now and we anticipate an early decision, can the Minister indicate, with the support of all Members in the Atlantic area, some due consideration for this firm which has shown an expertise in this area so that we may provide additional jobs in an area where they are much needed now?

[Translation]

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I trust that Members on all sides of the House will support the frigate program as soon as it is underway. In fact, the two finalists have submitted their tenders, and I expect we shall be announcing to whom the contract has been awarded at the beginning of this summer. I also trust, Madam Speaker, that the economic spinoffs will be acceptable to the Members of this House.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

WORDING OF CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD—STATUS OF NATIVE WOMEN

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice and is with regard to the constitutional Accord he will be laying before the House for ratification. The Minister is aware of a most serious discrepancy between the Accord agreed to by the federal and provincial Governments, and by native leaders, and the Accord that was agreed to in two meetings away from the plenary session, and actually laid before the members for signature. Moreover, the Minister was aware of the discrepancy on Wednesday morning and committed himself to correcting what he called an oversight before the document was presented for signature. Why did the Minister choose instead to deceive the native peoples deliberately, who thought they were acting in good faith, and which version of the Accord will he bring to the House for ratification?