

finding jobs. The program is headed by an outstanding Nova Scotian named Rocky Jones, and as I say, it has had all federal government funding, some \$127,000 in total, cut by the Conservative Government.

● (1800)

I asked the Minister at the time to look into this cut in funding for this important agency and, in fact, to restore the funding to the agency which helps so many hundreds of ex-convicts every year. In responding, the Minister of Justice indicated that he would indeed take up the matter with his colleague, the Solicitor General (Mr. Kelleher), and ensure that he gets back to me within an appropriate time with the information required. We are still waiting for an explanation from the Solicitor General as to this very callous cut in funding for an important community organization which helps ex-prisoners get reintegrated into society.

Real Opportunities for Prisoner Employment, or ROPE, was created in 1979 as a short-term research project which operated from the Carleton Community Correctional Centre. It was incorporated as a society in February of 1982. It operated with the basic premise that lack of employment and subsequent income hastened an offender's involvement in criminal activities, both prior to his involvement with the criminal justice system and during.

The key elements of job creation and job placement are the primary indicators for evaluation of programs for funding sources but, as ROPE points out, the root causes of the clients' problems are far deeper than their inability to obtain and maintain employment. They note that the majority of ex-prisoners have drug and alcohol problems and that many suffer from severe addiction. The instability of their life style prevents most from maintaining stable employment. Thus, Mr. Speaker, employment-related programs for the offender must provide for interventions that deal with the root causes of the person's problems.

Since 1982 the Correctional Service of Canada has provided CORE funding for ROPE. That involves administrative costs including administrative staff and job placement or peer counsellors. The program evaluations of this excellent program have been glowing. In fact, the latest written program evaluation of ROPE was conducted in 1985 by Jack Stewart of the Correctional Service of Canada which stated:

The CORE program of the ROPE Association providing job search and placement services is extremely successful and competitive and deserves the strongest possible support from CSC in maintaining the service and assisting in the broadening of the financial base of the CORE program.

The program got top marks for the work that it was doing with former prisoners to help them reintegrate in the community. Despite that, as of April 30 of this year their funding was totally cut. My New Democratic Party colleague in the provincial legislature in Nova Scotia, Mr. Bob Levy, the NDP justice spokesperson in Nova Scotia, gave a notice of motion on Wednesday, April 13, as follows:

### *Adjournment Debate*

Whereas Real Opportunities for Prisoner Employment, also known as ROPE, has provided an invaluable service to ex-prisoners in getting re-established in the community and not ending up back in prison; and

Whereas it costs between \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year to keep one person in prison while ROPE served 200 people a year with an annual budget of less than \$150,000; and

Whereas Correctional Services Canada has arbitrarily decided to terminate its support for this innovative and important service to Atlantic Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that this House call upon the federal Solicitor General to reverse Correctional Services' decision to cancel its funding of ROPE and to consider greater support of community correctional services.

I support that call by my distinguished colleague in Nova Scotia, Mr. Levy. Indeed, by cutting funding for this important program the Government is doing a grave disservice to people in the Halifax—Dartmouth metro area. Indeed, there have been a number of questions raised as to why this decision has been made. The community has called on the Conservative Government to reinstate the funding.

The Executive Director, Rocky Jones, has said that the agency's role has been to "meet guys at the railway station that no one else is going to meet . . . We work with the total person, trying to deal with his self-esteem, to get him away from his former life".

On Tuesday of this week I was at the special handling unit, the super maximum institution in Archambault in Quebec. I talked there with prisoners who asked what they are supposed to do when they are released from a maximum security institution, given \$50, and told to be on their way. It is no wonder that many of these prisoners are not able to function and to cope.

● (1805)

Here is an agency that is actually assisting these former prisoners to reintegrate in the community. I hope the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General (Mr. Cardiff) will rise in his place today to say that yes, the federal Conservative Government recognizes that a mistake has been made and that this community agency that works with ex-prisoners in the Nova Scotia area does an outstanding job. I hope it will reinstate the funds that are so badly needed to keep this important service going.

It is an independent agency, independent of the Correctional Service. We hope this is not a step by the Correctional Service to try to weaken the role of community agencies which are, in fact, independent.

**Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak further on the issue raised on April 29, 1988, by the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) on the organization known as Real Opportunities for Prisoner Employment and the reasons why the Correctional Service of Canada has not renewed its funding.

In the 1986-87 fiscal year, the Correctional Service of Canada could not maintain the level of growth of previous