

Supply

in central Canada. I know of instances where one required the blessing of the defeated candidate to have his project approved.

The Chairman: I wish to inform the hon. minister that the hon. member for Matapédia-Matane has only 1½ minutes remaining and that he should attempt to give his answer in that time.

Mr. Atkey: Once again the hon. member repeated his allegation, but he raised another novel proposition which I should like to explore for a moment. He seems to be suggesting by implication, at least in the province of Quebec, that because one is a defeated candidate, albeit a Progressive Conservative defeated candidate, that one is somehow disqualified from applying for or sponsoring a Canada Works application.

Some hon. Members: No, no!

Mr. Atkey: That is what I heard.

An hon. Member: That is not what he said.

Mr. Atkey: I do not accept that proposition. I put forward the proposition that I make the decisions on Canada Works. It is my responsibility and obligation under law to do so. I take all the advice I can get. Regardless of what may have transpired under the previous government, it is my responsibility to take all the information and advice I can obtain when I am seeking it. I will not cast aspersions on the previous government because I was not here during the last Parliament. I will make decisions and they will be made fairly in accordance with the needs of the community. I reject the implication that if one is a Progressive Conservative or a member of some party other than the Liberal party, somehow one is disintitiled to give advice to a minister or to participate as a sponsor in a project. That is wrong, and I reject it.

An hon. Member: He did not say that.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Chairman, we have heard an interesting exchange which took up a lot of time. I do not think it proved anything, although I must admit that in my own constituency there was not a constituency advisory council in 1973. They were not introduced until 1974, although LIP and OFY had been in effect for two years or three years prior to that. They came into effect in 1974, and I set one up in my constituency. In fact, we were given the right to vote on that for the first two years. Then it was declared that the member was not entitled to sit or vote on constituency associations, and for the last three years we have not had a vote. Since I had gone to the trouble of setting up such an association I never presumed that I, over the ten or 13 people who were on this advisory group, should overrule their collective wisdom, and I never did overrule their collective wisdom.

● (1600)

I can remember on one occasion when I did write to the minister saying I certainly did not think that a certain program should go ahead. I was overruled by the minister, and it

[Mr. De Bané.]

went ahead regardless. That was only on one occasion, so I do know of an occasion at least in my own situation where a minister disagreed with what my advice and thoughts were, but by and large the constituency advisory group has been quite useful.

I know also, of course, that each year we talked about politicizing Canada Works, LIP and OFY, because it turned out often enough that Liberal cabinet ministers ended up getting larger shares than anybody else, and Liberal members, if you broke it out, always got more than Conservative members. It was just like decentralization. There was decentralization into 16 constituencies, 14 of which were represented by Liberals, and 11 of them by cabinet ministers. These things sometimes happen. It must be a freak of nature that they always happen that way.

However, Mr. Minister—

Mr. Knowles: Order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dick: You have had your chance. You will have to get him on another day. I have some questions I want to put to the minister now. I too—

An hon. Member: Address the Chair.

Mr. Dick: Thank you for your assistance. I too, Mr. Chairman, would like through you to inform the minister that I would like to have the results of the regional economist for my constituency because we have got those results through one method or another before. We have also got results from each of the manpower offices, and I can tell you that in my constituency the results of the manpower offices and the results of the regional economist varied greatly, very, very greatly from what they call the labour surplus rate.

This labour surplus rate formula which was introduced by the previous administration under the directorship of Bud Cullen I have disagreed with entirely from the beginning. I shall explain why. If you are in a place of high unemployment—and you only have to go 50 miles up the Ottawa River on the Ontario side and you will find 15 per cent or 17 per cent unemployment—you do not have to go all the way to Matane, Labrador or Newfoundland, because there are pockets of high unemployment in Ontario and on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. I want to tell the minister, and I hope he will pay attention, if you go by just the postal codes of those people who are getting cheques from unemployment insurance and you have a high rate of unemployment, there will be those who have gone through the entire period getting their cheques and using up all their weeks and have fallen off at the end who are not going to be counted any more because they are not getting cheques.

On the other hand, Mr. Chairman, if you have an area of high unemployment, the young people coming out of school cannot get jobs and they cannot put in enough weeks' work to ever get unemployment insurance, so they are not counted.

When you have those areas of higher unemployment, the ones who have used up their benefits and have fallen off at the