

Adjournment Debate

The next year, the local advisory board was phased out so that it was left up to the Member of Parliament and employees of the Department to recommend to the Minister how those funds should be allocated to groups within the constituency. We finally find ourselves in a situation where, under the Canada Works Program, the native allocations, whether they be for treaty, Métis or Non-Status Indians, do not come before the Member of Parliament for input any longer. In fact, the funds are no longer applied to these particular groups by constituency. They are applied to the province or by region. It is only by the good graces of employees within the Department and within the Employment and Development Branch that we are or are not consulted on the funding that goes into these projects. Our concurrence in the allocation of these funds is certainly not a formal requirement.

• (1815)

A couple of things happen, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say to the Parliamentary Secretary that, first of all, there are expectations built up by the native people in terms of the process which the funding mechanism goes through from the time the allocations are made until they are completed. Even though I did not have direct input into the funding for native programs under Canada Works, we still are asked as Members of Parliament what is happening to the funds, why they are held up for so long? It causes a communication problem.

I believe the second problem it causes, Mr. Speaker, is a lack of local consultation. I would urge the Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister of Employment and Immigration to go back to the system where there are local advisory boards, along with the local Members of Parliament, in consultation with the employees of the Employment and Development Branch of the Department of Employment and Immigration. In this way they can sit down and discuss the allocations of these moneys which are made to groups within the constituency. I believe that is a much preferable route to be taking, Mr. Speaker, than the one we find ourselves taking now, where there is really a breakdown in communications in the program. I believe this is quite evident in the fact that it took some five and a half to six months from the time the projects for the reserves I mentioned were recommended by the region until the Minister finally gave approval to distribute these funds.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Dubois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the issue raised by the Hon. Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish) concerning allocations for native projects under the Canada Works Program. Contrary to the Hon. Member's impression, the Province of Saskatchewan did receive a special grant under the latest Canada Works series to create additional jobs for Treaty and Non-Treaty Native people. That provincial grant to be used exclusively for native projects amounts to \$960,000, including \$362,151 set aside for eleven projects sponsored by

Saskatchewan Treaty Native people. In addition, approval has been given for 16 Non-Treaty Native people sponsored projects worth \$597,372. Those two grants add up to \$959,523, that is \$477 less than the original grant. Last February 15, the Hon. Member alleged that no project for the Metis or Non-Status Indians had been developed in his constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should enquire more thoroughly about activities in his constituency under the Canada Works Program. I know he listed some 11 projects. I imagine that, as far as these 11 projects are concerned, keeping in mind what I have just told him, these projects have certainly been accepted. I do not have their numbers at hand, but I imagine that the Department will be able to provide an answer to the Hon. Member on the basis of what he has said in his comments. Personally, I can assure him that I shall check with the Department to determine whether these eleven or six projects mentioned by the Hon. Member have been accepted.

In fact, the records of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission show that three projects for Non-Status Indians have been approved for the constituency of The Battlefords-Meadow Lake. I would like to take this opportunity to tell the Hon. Member that four other projects for Status Indians have also been approved for that region.

Mr. Speaker, on December 8, 1983, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) announced that a considerable amount of money, that is \$15 million would be allocated to the Canada Works Program to promote projects submitted by Status Indians. The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission is already considering proposals made by band councils even though this amount will be available only at the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year, namely on April 1, 1984, in a few days from now. The Hon. Member maintains that the amount allocated to his constituency is based on an 8 per cent unemployment rate. As the minister stated in his letter dated September 12, 1983, moneys are allocated on the basis of the surplus manpower rate, which contrary to the unemployment rate, excludes workers on sick leave or on maternity leave. All the constituencies having a surplus manpower rate higher than 8 per cent have received a basic allocation. On the other hand, regions with a surplus manpower rate of 8 per cent or more were allowed to receive additional amounts. This type of distribution guarantees a fair and equitable use of these funds. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I repeat that the native people of The Battlefords-Meadow Lake are receiving considerable amounts of money for job creation and that they may very well be granted additional amounts. I believe that this takes care of the question asked by the Hon. Member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m.

At 6.20 p.m., the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.