

may be a decline in the population numbers, if the ratio of participation rates goes up, it will tend to shorten the gap between labour demand and labour growth.

At the same time I think we will still be facing the possibility of running labour short in key areas of the population which have been traditionally restricted to male workers, because that may be the area where the shortage may show up most profoundly. That is why it is important for us to develop ways of making a transition in providing opportunities for women to move into non-traditional work, and that is one of the reasons why we have introduced several new programs to that effect.

Mr. Foster: There is one short question to which I would like the minister to respond. It concerns some indication that the direct employment programs, such as the community development program, will be in operation, or a clear signal given that this program will operate for two or three years. This would allow municipalities to do a phased project. After all, they have to put up the material costs. I wonder if the minister is planning to have the funding for such direct employment programs in the main estimates next year, because in the past year they have been in the supplementary estimates and there has been no clear indication of the length of time during which the program will run. I think it is important both for municipal officials and employees in the minister's own department to have a clear signal that the program will last for one, two or three years. I hope that that will be the way in which the program will be operated.

Mr. Axworthy: May I say in half a minute that that is a very worthy proposal. We are examining it in the context of the over-all evaluation we are conducting of labour market requirements which the task force and others are examining. Of course, the only limitation is that estimates can only signify money for one year, and we must keep going back for new funding. But certainly from my experience the community services program, in which we provided for the extension of the program over a three-year period, seems to be working very well. We will be using it as a model to examine, as part of the larger direct employment programs.

● (1800)

Mr. Hawkes: Could I ask the minister how many people live in Alberta?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I do not have the exact figures. I believe it is somewhere over the two million mark and growing very rapidly, by about 8 per cent per year.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Chairman, it is a little over 2,100,000. How many people live in western Canada?

Mr. Collette: What is this?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, if the member persists in elementary geography and demography lessons, I am sure we can get him an atlas which would supply him with information. But I would hope we could go on to more serious topics.

Supply

Mr. Hawkes: It is a little over six million. About 8 per cent of the people of the country live in the province of Alberta; a little over 25 per cent live in western Canada. In the registered apprenticeship trades in Canada, what proportion of those registered in apprenticeship trades programs are registered in the province of Alberta?

Mr. Axworthy: I will get those figures for the hon. member. We will look them up.

Mr. Hawkes: Are those figures available from the minister's officials? I am willing to wait a moment.

Mr. Axworthy: Yes.

Mr. Hawkes: Could I have the figures for western Canada as well? The answers to those questions are important to the line of questioning I wish to pursue.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member will bear with me, I will provide the following figures. Under the present institutional training programs, in the province of Manitoba there are 9,640; in the province of Saskatchewan there are 8,947—

Mr. Hawkes: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Axworthy: —in the province of Alberta there are 29,465; in the province of British Columbia there are 33,833. In industrial—

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Calgary West is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Chairman, I just asked the minister for the registered apprenticeship trades programs. He is giving the programs of his department, but I am interested in the proportion of people in apprenticeable trades who are registered in the province of Alberta. I suggest to the minister that it is in excess of 25 per cent, with around 8 per cent of the population. Will the minister simply confirm that and give me the figures for western Canada?

Mr. Axworthy: I was endeavouring to give the figures for western Canada before the hon. member popped to his feet with one of his often gratuitous points of order. If I may continue giving the answer, under the industrial program, which pays for most of the apprenticeship programs or the critical trade skills, the following figures are available for the province of Alberta, 6,563; in the critical trade skills area, 200. Those are the programs we supply. If the hon. member wants further numbers, we will endeavour to find them for him.

Mr. Hawkes: I suggest to the minister that the province of Alberta specifically and western Canada generally have the best record in Canada today of people in trades training programs. I think the facts are such that well over one-quarter of the people registered in apprenticeable trades in Canada today are registered in the province of Alberta. I raised that issue in that form because, as reported on page 5418 of *Hansard*, the minister made the following statement: