

*Supply*

For the past fifteen days or so, it has come as quite a surprise to hear our colleagues across the floor complain that the Government has allocated its job creation funds in a partisan fashion. It seems to me that they are afraid or quite simply naive to the point that they do not want to face reality and see for themselves just what has been happening.

A moment ago I referred to the amounts of money spent to create jobs. Well, that money was spent on the basis of unemployment figures. It stands to reason that the bulk of the money went to those regions of Canada where the unemployment rate was highest. As it happened, some of the funds went to many ridings represented by our Liberal colleagues, Mr. Speaker, precisely because those ridings had the highest number of job seekers in the country. I might give my region as an example—eastern Quebec and my riding of Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine—where at certain times of the year, we had as much as 60 per cent of the labour force out of work.

No wonder therefore that we should get a lot of money to create jobs. Still, Mr. Speaker, I must point out that the then Minister of Employment and Immigration was very anxious to open up our job creation programs to as many people and organizations as possible, so he managed to streamline the twelve programs we had then into four new ones. We thought at the time that those programs should be made readily available to all and that the various local groups should find it easier to apply for those programs.

It has been realized over the last two weeks or so that most, if not all Canadians understand and endorse the amendments we made to our job creation programs, and especially that many groups could apply, except our friends opposite, our friends from both Opposition parties. To listen to them in this House for the past two weeks, one would think they alone in Canada have not understood the amendments we have made to these programs in order, as I said, to make them more readily available to the people, and easier to understand. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the Canadian people know exactly what the Opposition parties are up to, and that is why they were not elected in 1980. For that same reason, the people will not dare elect them at the next election, simply because they find so hard to understand the various job creation programs we are putting forward and want to make available to all.

● (1740)

Once again, Mr. Speaker, to put it briefly, these projects that we have streamlined into four are extremely simple and readily available. And they are extremely easy to administer. Whether it is Career-Access or Job Corps or again the NEED or the LEAP Program, these are all programs which ensure that people in high unemployment areas can apply and benefit from those funds.

Another important point has been raised this week and the week before to the effect that Hon. Members had not been

made aware of the various existing programs. I have before me, Mr. Speaker, letters sent to me as an elected representative, as a Member of Parliament, by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Those letters were sent to all Members of this House. In January 1982, the 282 Members of this House received a letter from the Minister informing them about the Summer Canada Program. That information was made available to all Hon. Members opposite. In February 1983, Mr. Speaker, once more, the then Minister sent a letter to all Members of Parliament giving them all kinds of information on the Summer Canada Program.

In December 1983, once again, a letter was sent to all Members to inform them about the funds allocated to each constituency under the Canada Works projects.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, on December 30, 1983, the Minister of Employment and Immigration sent everyone of us various information on the Summer Canada Program for the whole country and for each constituency. How can we accept that those Members now complain they have not been informed of the various job creation programs? More questions should be raised, Mr. Speaker, and we should try to find out the true reasons why we are called to task today for having failed to provide the House with adequate information about our job-creation programs. While Members on this side of the House were protecting the interests of their constituents and fighting unemployment throughout the country, those people, especially the members of the Official Opposition, were fighting over their party leadership. That episode lasted for two or three months if not four. Therefore, it is not surprising that they did not have enough time to read letters from the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Afterwards, they organized a four-month leadership convention. Once again, it is not surprising that those people did not have time to read their mail. They travelled throughout the country, as it was pointed out earlier this year, to try and enroll young people as delegates to their convention. They went on arguing throughout the country to see what candidate they would support. How could they get around to read letters from the Minister of Employment and Immigration?

They would come late or at the last minute to sittings of committees and ask just a few questions to be able to show their constituents that they were dealing with unemployment. But that was not their main concern. They had more vital issues on their mind, that is their convention. After the convention, we thought that they would be at least in a position to look after their constituents and get acquainted with the various job-creation programs available.

I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) is probably the only Opposition member who has been able to understand and benefit from these projects, probably because he has somewhat withdrawn from this leadership squabble. He stayed on the sidelines and