

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair did not draw the same imputation from that comment that it did from the earlier one, because of the way the Hon. Member put it. I will allow the Minister to answer, but I ask all Members to realize that we get close to personal language sometimes, which we should not do.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Member has suggested that jobs being created in this country are not meaningful. I ask him to go out and talk to some of the people who have received jobs.

Mr. Allmand: I have.

Miss MacDonald: I can tell you that they are very pleased that they now have a Government through which jobs are being created for a change, instead of being lost as they were under the previous Government. I would also say to him that 76 per cent of the new jobs that have been created are full-time jobs, where people have an opportunity to go back into the job market full-time.

DEPUTY MINISTER'S MEMORANDUM

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the same Minister. What kind of political direction has been given to her Ministry that would lead the Deputy Minister to conclude that it would be appropriate to use public funds to assist Richard Hatfield's re-election?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I did not see that memo until last night. I have been in Toronto all this morning speaking to a gathering there. I have asked to see the official in question later this afternoon because I think that there are a number of constructions that can be put on that memorandum. I would like to know the construction that he puts on it. I do not intend to prejudice his activities until I have had an opportunity to speak to him.

MEMORANDUM ADDRESSED TO MINISTER

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with the inner office operations that she does not see a memo directed to her, which states quite clearly, as I read it, that she should use public funds to assist Richard Hatfield's re-election? That memo is signed and sent by her Deputy Minister.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have already said that I did not see that memorandum until last night. I also want to assure the Hon. Member that it was not a question of doing something other than would have been done under the normal routine of the Canadian Jobs Strategy. That is what we were talking about and what was discussed with me, and had

nothing to do with regard to the memo, elections, phone calls or anything else—none of which happened. We are talking about a situation which was fantasy.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Miss MacDonald: I want to tell the Hon. Member that what we have been doing is discussing—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister may want to make a statement.

FORESTRY SECTOR JOB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. A short time ago the Minister of Employment and Immigration announced the creation of a Forestry Sector Job Development Program with the stated objective being to improve forest management skills. Why did the Minister, who only recently announced the creation of this program, change her mind and decide to cut the program funding from \$6 million in 1985-86 back to \$2 million in 1986-87? Why the about-face from a Government that has made all kinds of promises to the forestry sector of Canada?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we are funding many forestry projects across the country. I have had representations from members of his Party indeed to cut them back and I have resisted that in many cases. I want to assure the Hon. Member that the projects that we have under way in the forestry sector will improve skills and allow people to practise silviculture, to help with conservation, and in fact to beef up in many quarters the amount of money that is going into forestry.

Mr. Hopkins: Maybe we will have another answer on Monday.

PETAWAWA NATIONAL FORESTRY INSTITUTE COURSE

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. What logic did the Minister use when she decided to cut off, as of July 4, a forest management skills development program involving a large number of students at the Petawawa National Forestry Institute instead of allowing them to complete the course as of the planned date, January 4, 1987? Why such irrational decisions just to simply quit everything in midstream?

● (1450)

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we have some 14,000 projects under way in the country which employ people, train people, and provide them with skills. I do not have all the details of each and every one of those projects in my head. However, if the Hon. Member will give me the details of the project in question, I will be glad to look into it for him.