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sion which deals with native employment issues. We have begun to put more emphasis on the aspect the hon. member has mentioned, that in the downtown areas of cities it is often the single parent native women who are the real problem. For example, we initiated a special Outreach program in Winnipeg to work with native women in the downtown area to relate them, for example, to the fashion industry and other employment opportunities. The project has been going for two months, and it is preparing its first report. As a result of that report, I hope that we will be able to expand this concept to other western cities.

Mr. Schellenberger: Mr. Chairman, the minister mentioned what is happening in his department. Is there also an inter-departmental group working on these problems, many of which lie in other departments? We are always seeking better co-ordination of the funds which are spent.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I did not make it clear that the cabinet committee on social development, which is composed of ministers of the government whose departments relate to social development programs, is looking at that problem as a priority item. A secretariat is assigned to that cabinet committee and it is involved in a task force arrangement calling for a report to that cabinet committee, at which point the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Secretary of State, the minister for DREE and myself will get together to review the report and make recommendations back to the committee.

Mr. Schellenberger: Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for that clarification. We were in government for such a short period that I am not aware of all the intricacies.

The Chairman: This will be the hon. member's last question.

Mr. Schellenberger: I would like to question in a little more detail the \$10 million allotted for the training program. I realize that it is in its developing stages, but the minister might be able to enlighten us as to how the program is going.

The most recent estimate I have, up to mid-November shows that 1,255 native people have enrolled in institutional training and 225 have enrolled in industrial training. Are these figures what the minister expected? Is he satisfied with the number of applicants, and how the program is going to date? Were many, or any, of the applicants refused? How much of the \$10 million is accounted for to date?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, the program started up over the summer months. We believe it is on target and I think the hon. member's figures are accurate in terms of the actual number of allocations. Our target throughout the program is 2,100 placements on the institutional side and 1,719 on the industrial side. We feel that with the projects now coming on stream we will be able to meet that target during the fiscal year. We are now at the stage where the largest number of projects are to be examined or approved during the next two or three months. It took the summer to make the program

available, to get the information out and get the proposals back.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tousignant: Mr. Chairman, it is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to give to the House my views on employment and immigration. First, I would like to mention the fact that this subject is of interest to me having been myself an employer for a good 15 years hiring personnel and acting as manager, mediator, pay clerk and doing all those other things good and bad that go with being the boss. Thanks to this experience I can state that we still have in Canada a potential and a labour force of exceptional quality provided we know how to use it with respect, care and intelligence.

When I speak of an intelligent use of this labour force, I mean the practical aspect of the working conditions, but I also mean the general framework of things in terms of employment policy and labour legislation. While I admit we must improve labour-management relations we must also take care of not giving in to over-regulation or what I would call an inextricable bureaucratic network of standards and regulations which in the end create more problems and headaches than improvements.

But first, Mr. Chairman, one word of warning: I am neither backward nor old fashioned. I do not want to turn back the clock. But allow me to make a few observations to prove what strikes me as meddling, pure and simple, on the part of governments, an interference that is unjustified and condemnable. I am alluding here to that servile and degrading obligation for a worker to get a permit in order to earn his living, as is the case in the building trade in Quebec. Under the pretext of cleaning up the trade and setting quotas, supposedly to improve it, what happens in fact? Exactly the opposite. Yes, the situation is improved for a minute percentage of the work force but it is a nuisance for all the other workers. To get a permit, a worker must have put in at least 250 hours of work in the previous year in the construction trade, and to put in those 250 hours in the field of construction in Quebec, one needs a permit. One cannot make head or tail of it; it is as difficult to explain, with all due respect, Mr. Chairman, as if I were to ask you why dogs do not have piles at this time of the year.

● (2000)

As I mentioned earlier, before becoming involved in politics I was an employer. People would be surprised, Mr. Chairman, if I told them how many times competent and well-intentioned applicants have come to my office to ask for a job knowing all too well in advance that they would have to face the injustices of the system. They knew they could not qualify but when you are hungry, when you are desperate, you will try anything. I could see them feeling uneasy, embarrassed, considering themselves quite guilty of having to ask for a job. Imagine the situation. A family man only asking for the possibility of