

Supply

minister is planning to do that in other communities across the country, thus increasing the tradesmen who are available while at the same time giving more Canadians a chance to work in trades where there is a shortage of supply.

The minister noted on Friday in his speech that about 170,000 jobs were created this year. He also indicated that the number of people coming into the labour force would be reduced during the next few years. I wonder if the minister could provide us with the figure for the actual number of people which the department anticipates will come into the labour force between 1981 and 1985. It seems to me that it would be useful for the House to know whether the actual number of people coming into the labour force, as projected by the department, is dropping. This has been indicated many times, but we are not sure of the exact projections of the department. Surely it would be useful, in planning the work of the committee and of the department, if the number of people coming into the labour force were reduced during this period. Ultimately this would reduce the number of unemployed.

Mr. Chairman, I want to leave sufficient time for the minister to respond to the several questions I have put to him, so I will take my seat now.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank the hon. member for a series of interesting and important questions. I will try to answer them as best I can in the time he has left me.

On the first question concerning the funding for the community development projects, as I pointed out, we have to work within the estimate limits which were set by the previous government. We are now reconsidering the employment programs we have. As I pointed out in my previous answer, we are at present looking at these matters in cabinet. There is the obvious difficulty that there are thousands of demands on very scarce resources and we are trying to allocate them to the most important needs. Certainly it is my intention to request some additional funds in the employment area. When we are able to make some decisions on the budget allocations put forward by the Minister of Finance, the hon. member will find proper attention paid to the employment requirements in this country, particularly in areas of high unemployment.

On the issue of the Blind River office, I apologize to the hon. member but a decision has not yet been made. We are assessing the requirements of either setting up a branch office or of increasing the frequency of our visits to the area. I hope we will be able to have a decision for the hon. member by mid-January, so he can assure his constituents that they will have some form of improved service by that period.

On the question of the trade schools, I have been intrigued by that particular development. We have received a high degree of co-operation from the government of Ontario in developing new approaches to training programs. We will be starting major negotiations with all provincial governments within the next six to nine months on the extension of the occupational training act. This is the fundamental formula we use for applying training moneys to provincial institutions. It is

our hope at that time, when we have possession of some of the findings and ideas that have been developed by the Allmand task force and the task force working in our own department, to be able to use those ideas as a way of developing new approaches which we will be in a position to discuss with provincial officials.

I would say by way of comment that the new approach which that trade school initiative represents is one that I personally find very attractive because it responds to the real problem of making sure that those who are going into training programs are not limited to either institutional or industrial training but have a combination of both. We have been looking at the polytechnic model which is used in Europe as one of the ways in which we can focus on particular sector needs, whether it be in construction, aerospace, or whatever, to set up different kinds of training centres which would specialize in those areas across Canada. We will be looking at that experiment very closely, analysing it and discussing it with provincial officials.

In the area of the LEDA proposals, as the hon. member will recognize, we put that forward as an experimental program in longer-term community economic development, and we will be administering this jointly with the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. As I indicated at the time, our resources would allow for perhaps 15 projects across Canada. At this time we have received upwards of 40 applications, and many keep coming in, which shows the attractiveness of that approach. So we will be in the very tough position of having to decide which projects may best illustrate different facets of different ideals, different methods of local economic development, and we will be choosing according to that criterion. So some choice will begin to be made within the next month when an announcement will be made. My own regret is that we will not be able to fund all the projects, but will be choosing them according to those which give the best over-all picture of different opportunities and different alternatives which we can try.

With regard to the labour force growth, this is work that is being done by the different task forces which are working at present. By way of illustration, early forecasts have shown that while the labour force growth in the period of 1976 to 1979—the period which we have just completed—has been about 3 per cent, it is our expectation that in the period 1980 to 1985 it will be in the range of about 2 per cent, which, when measured against the labour force in Canada, which is in the neighbourhood of about 11.6 million workers, will show an approximate growth of 900,000.

We have to be very careful in using that figure in the sense that one other phenomenon or trend has been quite obvious, and that is the increasing participation rate of the labour force. One thing we have been noticing is that the participation of women has gone up radically, by almost 5 per cent or 6 per cent in the last four or five years. The participation rate of young people has also gone up quite remarkably so that there is a higher ratio of people working than at any other time in the country as compared to over-all population. So while there