

Oral Questions

● (1500)

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I think most of us in the House will recall very specifically that there was a promise that those jobs would be on line in early summer, or, for some, even in late Spring. That is another promise which was not kept. I suspect the Prime Minister was hesitant about answering because of the promise that he did keep and that his Government has kept. As a westerner, I remember that 15 months ago in Banff he mentioned that, if he had to, there was one thing he could do, and that was to scare the hell out of Canadians. He certainly has done that.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Two years ago in the House we were reminded that there were over ten million people employed full-time in Canada. Since then over half a million people have lost full-time jobs that will not be replaced. The Government has set specific targets for inflation. Why will it not do the same now for employment? Will the Government set a specific target for employment levels and then bring in concrete programs to achieve that target?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I should like to remind the Hon. Member that Canada is creating jobs at the present time at a faster rate than any other industrial country in the world.

Mr. Crosbie: That is absolute bunk. Tell the truth for a change.

Mr. Lalonde: Under this Government, this was the situation in the ten years between 1970 and 1980. As we are coming out of the recession, we are creating jobs in this country faster than the United States, faster than any country in Europe, and faster than any other industrial country that my hon. friend can think of.

Mr. Crosbie: Faster than a speeding bullet. What nonsense!

Mr. Lalonde: I challenge my hon. friend to demonstrate the contrary. We are very concerned about job creation and we are attacking this problem very seriously and very systematically.

As the Hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration has indicated, we have created some 328,000 jobs since last November, on a seasonally adjusted basis. Today in Canada there are 800,000 more Canadians at work than there were last November. I invite my hon. friend to remember that record.

[Translation]

RESTRUCTURING OF PROGRAMS

Hon. Bud Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigra-

tion, and I also wish to congratulate him on his recent promotion within the Cabinet.

[English]

We respect the initiative shown by his predecessor in office who brought in many fine programs for the creation of employment. We have heard about the 328,000 jobs that have been created in the economy. The Minister recently indicated that he would be undertaking some reorganization of programs in place and that he would be making that announcement soon. I wonder if he is in a position to indicate what that reorganization will be and what impact he sees as far as numbers are concerned, whether it be in money or individuals.

[Translation]

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the Hon. Member for his congratulations.

[English]

It is true, as was announced in the budget last Spring, that we have undertaken a restructuring and reinforcement of a variety of job-creation programs under the Commission of Employment and Immigration. That consolidation and reinforcement goes into effect today. In effect the old programs have been placed in four major new thrusts of Canada Works, of Career Access, of the Job Corps and LEAD, the Local Employment Assistance and Development Program. Each of those programs is focused on a different area of the job-creation problem. Under these programs we expect to spend between \$1.3 billion and \$1.5 billion to create jobs in Canada this year and next.

I could go on in some detail to outline the purposes of the programs and the way in which they will operate, Madam Speaker. All Members of the House will receive, either today or tomorrow, a very extensive kit outlining the criteria and the application of those programs, and I urge them to study it with care.

* * *

FARM CREDIT CORPORATION

LEVEL OF FUNDING

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Madam Speaker, I have a question concerning farm finances and I will direct it to the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister will know that last Spring the Farm Credit Corporation asked for an additional \$600 million to meet its demands. The Minister of Finance subsequently approved \$250 million, which has virtually all been used up.

I should like to ask the Minister if he has made representations to the Minister of Finance on behalf of the Farm Credit Corporation to obtain some additional funding so that it will not simply become a lender of last resort.