

Supply

Portneuf, there are many non-profit organizations concerned with the development of their community, such as chambers of commerce, caisses populaires, social clubs, sports associations and all sorts of non-profit corporations. These groups always submit many well conceived projects, in accordance with the criteria set out in the program and satisfying a true need since they create jobs.

When they are financed, such projects bring about extraordinary results. I can name some which would never have happened without this program. I can mention the Marmite Falls in Rivière-à-Pierre, the Saint-Raymond ski resort, the Saint-Raymond Chamber of Commerce Information Centre, the Vieux Moulin Marcoux of Pont-Rouge, the nature centre in Saint-Basile and 90 per cent of all cross-country and nature trails of all municipalities in the Portneuf constituency.

Mr. Chairman, like all hon. members, I deplore the fact that the government of Quebec has refused to allow municipalities to sponsor projects. As the former mayor of a municipality such as Ville Saint-Raymond, which has developed enormously and introduced many projects in this area, I must say I am very disappointed at the attitude of the Quebec government and I hope the minister will exert all the pressures required so that municipalities can benefit from these programs even if this would mean deleting water and sewer systems, parks and so on from these programs. I believe that all the development that a municipality can enjoy would be very welcome within such programs.

On this same topic, I would like to call the attention of the hon. minister and all members of this House to another program which I believe will be ideal in developing a true policy of permanent employment development in constituencies such as mine. I sincerely believe that the Local Economic Development Assistance program, or LEDA, will become the most valuable of all programs introduced by the minister.

The purpose of the LEDA program is to help communities with rather slow growth and high unemployment. It will play an active role in creating permanent employment. This program, which will offer funds for analysis and development, will also provide limited financial assistance to businesses in the community and will be very useful in my constituency. In other words, LEDA is quite welcome in Portneuf. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, an organization of my constituency has already filed an application for this agency which could be located in the southern part of the Portneuf constituency and would regroup about 15 municipalities. The organization which applied is very excited about that program, and I remain convinced that the hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration, in conjunction with the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, will consider favourably the application of the Chamber of Commerce of Donnacona-Cap-Santé which is very hopeful it will be accepted in order to have such an agency in their community. I am told that here we have at last a program which exactly meets the needs of the area. And to

that I would add, Mr. Chairman, that I am very excited about that agency we could create there and which would be a great success, I am sure.

I must admit, Mr. Chairman, that I ask myself a few questions about the number of projects which will be accepted. People in the department informed me that once again, the applications will outnumber by far the projects which will be given the go ahead. Furthermore, I was told that the projects which are liable to be approved are those coming from areas with the highest unemployment rate. I would like to see the minister make an assesment or an in-depth study on all the applications he will receive, with the co-operation of his colleague, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion and, if necessary, to increase that budget envelope since that program will be by far the most effective in helping the small and medium-sized businesses in our areas. We should invest in the LEDA program since it should be emphasized to create permanent employment in our areas. The creation of such an agency meets also the expectations of business leaders who constantly face the administrative burden of all the job creation programs offered by both the federal and provincial governments. I think such an agency would be a necessary tool for the economic recovery of our area.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to put two questions to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. First, considering the number of applications received for community development projects, I would like to know whether his department will increase the funds earmarked for that program. Second, considering the high unemployment rate in Quebec, I would ask the minister whether it is possible that all LEDA projects suggested by the organizations be approved. He could answer my questions afterwards, but in concluding I would like to congratulate the Minister of Employment and Immigration, his parliamentary secretary, the member for Louis-Hébert as well as all department staff who in my opinion are doing effective work.

[*English*]

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. member for his kind remarks. I will make sure the parliamentary secretary hears of this. I know he likes to hear remarks like that. I will make my first job the transmission of the hon. member's comments to him. I would like to be able to say that we had more money to put into these projects. I agree with the hon. member. They provide a very important service.

Community development projects in terms of applications in relation to funds available are running four to one. Hon. members will recognize the tough job it is to make decisions on what must be cut out. I am attempting to persuade my colleagues in government that perhaps additional support will be necessary. If I can make a small unpaid political announcement, I am sure that any further representations by members on both sides to that extent would be of great help in making