

Oral Questions

seriously and give us a reply on whether he will use those arguments to convince cabinet to raise the cash advance levels.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will consider those arguments, and others. On the subject of grain performance, I would underline the fact that in the last several months Canada has signed four long-term grain agreements with the U.S.S.R., China, Algeria, and recently with Brazil. This is a great year indeed. Something else that is rather interesting is that a number of spot sales have been made, for example, to China, made possible by our capacity to deliver very rapidly the grain being ordered. That again indicates the importance of the transportation system in Canada, the primary objective in the western innovations that we are pursuing at this time.

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HOUSING

STATUS OF CANADIAN HOME OWNERSHIP STIMULATION PLAN

Mr. Garnet M. Bloomfield (London-Middlesex): Madam Speaker, the new program known as the Canada Home Ownership Stimulation Plan was announced approximately one month ago. Will the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation give this House an update on the status of the program, and an indication of how many Canadians are availing themselves of the \$3,000 grant made available to buyers of new homes or to first-time buyers of existing homes?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, as the Minister of State for Finance indicated, \$300 million was set out in the budget for this program to assist young Canadians. I am very pleased to report that, as of yesterday, 100,053 people had inquired about the plan, 51,941 had received application forms, 5,735 had returned the application forms, 2,641 had been approved, and 2,139 cheques were issued in the space of two weeks, helping the industry, creating jobs, and helping young Canadians find accommodation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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EMPLOYMENT

QUERY RESPECTING JOB-CREATION PROGRAMS

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration and his parliamentary secretary, I will direct my question to the Prime Minister. On Wednesday, the Minister of Employment and Immigration announced a total job-creation package which, at most, may provide 57,000 low-paying jobs; and only 14 per cent of the funds—the special response feature—will be partially used to help those who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits.

Considering that some half million Canadians will run out of unemployment insurance and go on welfare this year due to the long-term stagnation caused by Liberal policies, and that Wednesday's measures will constitute less than a 6 per cent solution to their problem of long-term unemployment and expired benefits, what additional non-political programs is the government prepared to pursue in order to provide productive jobs to these jobless Canadians all across Canada, and not just in Liberal ridings?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Immigration is well aware of the situation. He has the matter under study and will undoubtedly be able to give a reply to the hon. member in the House very soon.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO CONSTITUENCIES

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question should properly go to the Prime Minister. Yesterday we learned that much of the allocation of employment funds will be to Liberal ridings, mostly in eastern Canada. Now we have evidence of a politically directed allocation of employment fund opportunities in ridings within western Canada as well.

I have information from officers within Employment Canada, for instance, that, "The Prime Minister's office has been providing projects. They have to be approved by Lloyd Axworthy. There are no regional allocations." I would like to ask the Prime Minister, in relation to the immediate employment stimulation program, why are funds being directed by Liberal Senators in British Columbia, and Saskatchewan, and why is program direction coming from the Prime Minister's office instead of using the accountable, both financially and politically, process of local advisory boards, which would save money for the taxpayers and provide more jobs and more bang for the buck?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that this is one of the most accountable systems ever introduced in this country. Every Member of Parliament has a choice either to appoint an advisory committee or to do otherwise. The scheme is implemented along similar principles, and I am very surprised that the hon. member would attempt to discredit the program at this stage.

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FORESTRY

CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA AGREEMENT

Miss Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. It concerns the Canada-Nova Scotia forestry agreement. As the minister is aware, it expired at the end of March. Is the minister now in a position to tell the House when we can