

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the minister and say whether he is aware of the document the hon. member is referring to, but I will inform him.

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[English]

MANPOWER

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM—ASSISTANCE TO APPLICANTS BY PROJECT STAFF—CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL PEOPLE

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. It relates to the Opportunities for Youth Program for this year which comes under his jurisdiction. In view of the fact today is the final date for the submission of applications for Opportunities for Youth projects and in a number of provinces there have been no program or project staffs since the beginning of the year, in what way have young people in these various provinces been assisted either with regard to clarification or formulation of submissions which must be in by midnight tonight?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, there has been considerable publicity about the Opportunities for Youth Program for this summer and the availability of funding. Staff has been available to assist those people who wish to submit or design projects. I do not think it has been handled any differently than in the past. We anticipate a number of good project applications.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I know the minister would not want to mislead the House. He must be aware of the fact that in Prince Edward Island and I believe in New Brunswick and other provinces there have been no project staffs since the first of the year. It has been virtually impossible for young people to be informed of the nature and details of this year's Opportunities for Youth Program. What assistance will now be given, even at this late date, and in what way will the young people be assisted so that this year's program will operate at the level of previous years?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I do not anticipate any under-subscription to the funding of OFY. I will re-examine the exact location of our staff, as indicated by the hon. member, and if in any way I have been incorrect in my assumption I will communicate with him and alleviate the situation. At the moment, I do not consider this to have been an inhibition.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): When I asked the minister earlier about constituency advisory groups, he advised there would be no groups and that local people would be consulted. Will the minister indicate which local people will be consulted, the basis on which they will be selected and why in fact such constituency groups were not organized in view of the strong recommendation to this effect by OFY staff as early as last fall?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, representatives of social agencies, community organizations, citizens groups, municipal

[Mr. Caouette (Charlevoix).]

and township officials, federal and provincial government field staff, groups of individuals with specific competence or expertise in the area of project submissions, and members of parliament who indicate their willingness, desire and availability to be consulted, will be contacted.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): By whom and when?

Mr. Andras: By our OFY staff.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): You have no staff. How can you contact anybody?

Mr. Andras: On the second part of the question with regard to constituency advisory groups, I think I indicated in my letter to all hon. members that the allocation was based on the breakdown of 33 market labour-management areas rather than precisely the constituencies. In some cases these market areas will cover as many as eight or ten constituencies. Because of the difficulties that arise from that distribution in terms of a constituency advisory group, plus the lower amount of funding, plus the time element and because of administrative expenses involved in advisory groups, we decided that it was not practical this year to have constituency advisory groups.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM—VALIDITY OF FORMULA FOR ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AMONG PROVINCES

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Will the minister examine the validity of the formula by which the allocation of funds between provinces was made this year? Surely a formula that produces a sharp relative cut resulting in a smaller allocation to the four Atlantic provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories must be faulty, considering the fact that unemployment is higher in those areas than anywhere else in Canada.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that the formula and the statistics behind the formula are more precise and accurate than we have ever used in the past. I will be glad to go into more detail as to how it operates, although it might be necessary to do that on another occasion when dealing with estimates or, if hon. members wish, individually.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH—REQUEST FOR PUBLICATION OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In order that the whole House may be in a position to evaluate the program, and in light of the minister's letter to me earlier this week indicating an intention to hide from public view the official evaluation of last year's OFY program, will the minister give a commitment now to publish any evaluations that are undertaken regarding this program, and, will he tell the House what possible justification he can offer for keeping secret from parliament the results of that expensive assessment last year?