

Oral Questions

leader about the absence of the minister of energy, because I provide lists of ministers who are not here to each party. He could have chosen another day.

Let me say, in regard to his desire that Atomic Energy of Canada be wound up, perhaps we should discuss that with Ontario Hydro to see how that fits into its plans.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I am certain Ontario Hydro and more particularly the Government of Ontario would be delighted to discuss that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): The chain has been rattled, Mr. Speaker. Everywhere else on this planet the growth energy industries are solar, wind, biomass and hydrogen, options on which the government intends to spend, in total less than a third of what it intends to spend on the crumbling nuclear option.

Will the President of the Treasury Board take this opportunity to declare that there has been a terrible mistake and a terrible series of typographical errors in the energy department's estimates, that the numbers have been reversed, and that the government will spend \$177 million on energy efficiencies and alternatives and only \$55 million on nukes?

Hon. Gilles Loiseau (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, not at all. I have full confidence in the magnificent work of my colleague, the minister of energy.

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CANADIAN JOBS STRATEGY

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration or his alternate.

The real jobless rate in Newfoundland these days is close to 40 per cent. Indeed it is over 50 per cent in places like the Port au Port peninsula, St. George's area and Bay D'Espoir.

• (1140)

These people have been brought to their knees by the particular policies of this government. For example, the high dollar makes it difficult to sell forest exports, so the loggers are losing their jobs right and left.

I want to ask the minister: Why is the government in effect laughing at the misery of those people by choosing now to cut \$100 million from the Canadian Jobs Strategy program?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, I repeated earlier how important it was to train our workers, and I also recalled the very substantial amounts we added to the system in order to upgrade skills and training. We are convinced that in the long run, this is the right strategy to ensure that someone who is looking for a job will be able to adjust to new markets and to industry's new needs. That is why we are working very closely with the commission that makes recommendations on priorities to our department. I also come from a region where the unemployment rate is still far too high, to my liking, but I believe we will be able to find the right solutions to our economic and social problems.

[*English*]

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, that has to be the nicest, loveliest answer I have had in a long time, but it had very little to do with the question.

I have said to the minister, and I will say one more time, that there is a decrease. I ask her to look at the estimates. She is talking increase; I am talking decrease. The estimates clearly say that the program has been cut by \$100 million.

How can she stand there with a straight face and say that is an increase? Does she not realize that also last year the same program was cut by \$100 million?

When is she going to come to the real world with the rest of us and respond to the question? Why the decrease? Why now? Are you laughing at those people?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): No, Mr. Speaker, we are not laughing at workers who are looking for jobs. Yes, we are trying to find the right approaches, as a government, and yes, we did have the courage to act responsibly and make the unemployment insurance system an active system that will at last give workers a chance to acquire the skills they need to be able to cope with this new economic structure. We are putting the appropriate measures in place through the