

Supply

The fears of unemployment of those still employed arise from a number of causes. First is the recession. Second is the non-competitive position referred to by the Member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) of some of our so-called sunset industries. Finally, of course, is the issue which was raised, I believe, in a question put to the Hon. Member for Rosedale concerning unemployment resulting from the evolution of Canada—revolution, perhaps—by the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway, as we move from an industrial society to an information society.

I see you indicating, Mr. Speaker, that I have one minute left. It is not very much in the circumstances. I could go on about this subject at length. However, given the problem of time—

[Translation]

As far as technology is concerned, a very important question was raised by a representative of the New Democratic Party. How we adapt to new technology will depend largely on how we react to this fear which is very widespread and very serious. However, I am convinced, the Government is convinced, and I hope that the other Members of this House are as well, that although the rise in productivity resulting from improved techniques will reduce the number of jobs for a time, on the other hand, new technology will reduce the number of difficult and boring jobs, and give workers a chance to do work that is less arduous and more interesting, and I do not think we should be opposed to this happening. The biggest headache is the present transition period and the very obvious problem of structural unemployment. Union leaders, business, and the federal and provincial governments must work together to ease Canadians through this transition period and allay the fears of our workers by taking joint and positive action. Once more, Mr. Speaker, consultation is tremendously important in this respect. In concluding, I should like to refer once again to the scenario proposed by the Member for Vancouver Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) which I support—

[English]

—that we are entering a new world. Frankly, I believe that no generation has faced a future as promising and possibly as prosperous as the one we face if we are prepared to throw away our death grip on the past and look forward to those industries of the future that will arise out of the renewed and new technology, and research and development that this Government is so committed to. I say that whereas the current recession brings us hardship, what we see in front of us at the same time should give us a good deal of optimism and enthusiasm. Frankly, we should all be glad to be part of the decision-making process that can make it happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: Mr. Speaker, midway through his speech, the Minister invited us to ask questions with respect to the specific job-creation programs of the Government. The Minister may or may not be aware that I have had on the Order Paper since approximately mid-November a question in which I asked for

details with respect to the immediate employment stimulation project. To refresh the Minister's memory, it was a program which had allocated to it some \$150 million.

• (1430)

In his comments the Minister indicated that that program now has created 16,000 jobs. I might say that so far the Government has been unwilling to answer my question. It is two and a half or almost three months old, and this is the first time I have received any information on the immediate employment stimulation program and the fact that it created 16,000 jobs.

Would the Minister advise us who is responsible for the immediate employment stimulation program? Would he be willing to provide details as to why there was not any public participation or public process by which those funds were allocated? I have been unable to find out about any public process whatsoever. The record shows that the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) indicated in committee that he was not responsible for the program. He announced the program, but he said that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) may be responsible. I have been unable to find out so far who meets the allocation of the funds and by what process they are allocated. They amount to \$150 million and they are not on public view. Would he answer that question?

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Speaker, when I said that I would provide details, obviously I can only provide the details which I have in my possession as I stand in the House. One point of clarification so as to ensure that I do not mislead anyone in the House. When I give job numbers they are the job impact of the program for the period of the program. In some cases all those jobs exist; in some cases they will exist during the period from 1982 to 1984. In the case of the immediate employment program, it is the period in which the program is in effect.

My advice is that so far this program has been allocated to 400 approved projects and that during the period 1982 to 1984 16,000 short-term jobs will be created. I might add, in responding to the question regarding the use of the term "short-term jobs" that it is very important to realize that the criteria used in all short-term job-creation programs were intended to make a contribution to the basic economic infrastructure. While the jobs may be short-term, the benefits will be long-term. I do not think anyone on this side of the House would guarantee that that will always be the case in every instance, clearly with the magnitude of the programs in front of us, but that is the thrust. I must say that the programs which have been brought to my attention tend to confirm that that indeed is the case.

As to the actual mechanics of the program, they are not under my responsibility. Clearly, it is not an issue which would fall within the Economic Development Committee. Certainly I will be pleased to take that question under advisement and try to get the answer for the Hon. Member for Rosedale.