

### Supply

ments. If I am wrong, I would like to know about it, because I would like to discuss it with the province. As I understand it, the province is willing to undertake affirmative action programs in those areas, but given the bill of rights it had to take the necessary procedure to overcome that provision in the act.

I have travelled through those projects and I understand, particularly in the Syncrude project, that there has been great success with those programs, that many native people have been employed. Hopefully that will take place in other plants if the two governments can get together regarding the construction of those plants. Am I correct in my assumptions, or can the minister add anything to them?

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Chairman, essentially the member is correct that under the Alberta human rights act the only way in which there could be an exception and one could introduce an affirmative action program is by a specific order in council of the provincial cabinet. The native bands of the province have challenged the actual human rights act of Alberta by saying that it is unconstitutional. If the charter of rights we are discussing and debating presently is passed, it could very well be that that act would be unconstitutional. I am not a lawyer, so I will not judge it.

I also am concerned—and perhaps this is where the member missed some of the discussion—that the government of Alberta is even attempting to apply that standard against federal direct employment programs in which we have introduced the affirmative action principle. At this point the government of Alberta is not prepared to provide us with an exception on that. There is some ongoing discussion between our officials to overcome that problem.

**Mr. Schellenberger:** I was not aware that that was the case. I am sure some discussions will take place to see if in effect the province of Alberta is attempting to apply it. I would be very surprised if that was the case, particularly if it was to the benefit of certain groups in the province and did not lie in direct opposition to the statute in place. I would have to check on it before I could challenge the minister.

Another area I should like to discuss is one with which I am most familiar. I am referring to the native people of the country. I listened to the remarks which the minister made earlier in reply to another member, but one area which comes under his jurisdiction and which I should like to discuss with him for a moment is that of Indians who migrate to cities. They tend to lose the protection of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and end up constituting an increasing and disproportionate part of the caseloads of social agencies, including those dealing with health and welfare, and of correctional institutions. Most of the problem lies in their inability to obtain employment.

As I said earlier this week, recent surveys have indicated that unemployment for off-reserve Indian people is three to four times higher than that of non-Indians. The major reason for that—and this was cited by the department—was that Indian people tend to have a lack of training in those areas which are necessary for employment. There are certain physi-

cal disabilities and there is a need to attend to family responsibilities which particularly, in the case of women, is a problem. It means that they must live off social welfare rather than working. I suppose part of that lies in their inability to meet the skills which are necessary, and also the inability to get the daycare facilities, or to take advantage of daycare facilities if jobs are available.

● (1940)

As an example I use a case which exists in my own province where current migration trends indicate that by 1986 about 35 per cent of the registered Indian population of Alberta will be in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. That will constitute an even greater problem, of which I am sure the minister is aware. He is most likely taking those statistics into consideration when he looks to the programs he will be announcing in the 1980s.

If we look more closely at those statistics we will see that Indian people migrating to the urban centres today have an unemployment rate of over 27 per cent compared with the national rate, which is in the order of 8 per cent. If we project that figure we will see that by the mid-1980s the Indian population will have a much higher proportion of unemployed people between the ages of 15 and 29 than similar groups nationally. That figure will rise even higher as time goes on. We now find that Indian participation in the labour force is only two-thirds that of the national population. Their unemployment rate is generally 35 per cent, and, seasonally, it is as high as 75 per cent. We must organize our programs to meet that challenge as it becomes more intensive in the 1980s.

Due to the increase in the working population over the next ten years the number of native workers who will be unemployed could be as high as 30,000 to 40,000 people in the cities, if we are to project those figures. They will not have a job based on the statistics we have today if they have no additional programs or training. The average income earned by native people is half that of the national average. Therefore the entire Indian population is supported by only 30 per cent of its population. As I said before, this indicates we have more serious social problems in that sector of our society than in most other sectors. Those problems will only increase unless we deal with them.

The minister stated, in answer to another member, that those people on the reserves are generally looked after by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development through economic development funding. There is DREE and then, within that minister's department, there is LEAP, LIP and CMHC, which are attempting to deal with those problems. The minister categorized them for the hon. member.

The problem is that native people are becoming so efficient at filling out forms that the nearby towns are asking their advice to teach them to fill them out properly. The native people are becoming so good at it because they take advantage of these programs since there does not seem to be another alternative for them to follow. Because of these programs they move off the reserves to take the challenge of the cities. It often becomes quite hopeless in those areas.