

Adjournment Debate

Solicitor General would agree to defer a final decision on the matter.

As the Minister has previously stated, the post-secondary educational programs were good programs—he agrees with the Hon. Member—and the inmate students did benefit from them. But they have also proven to be too expensive to maintain. The programs cost \$3,500 per inmate per year and 232 inmates or 2.3 percent of the inmate population are involved in them. As you know, Mr. Speaker, these are times of economic restraint and the Correctional Services of Canada must also exercise restraint. Cancelling these programs will mean savings of \$541,428 in 1983-84, and \$744,062 in 1984-85, for a total saving of \$1,285,490 in 1982-83 dollars.

• (1820)

Although funding for post-secondary programs has been cut, inmates will be able to continue taking correspondence courses at their own time and expense. I hope these inmates will also rely on group meetings and self-help as learning methods. The service is undertaking to explore alternative sources of funding post-secondary educational programs. This could include grants from private foundations, loans, bursaries and scholarships for current students who might qualify.

The service will also continue to enhance primary education training, to raise the base level of literacy and to focus greater attention toward functionally illiterate inmates. Approximately 66 per cent of the CSC inmate population has an education of less than grade ten; of these about 18 per cent are functional illiterates.

As the Solicitor General said on January 24, he believes that the federal Government has a responsibility to rehabilitate offenders who are behind bars. We will continue to exercise that responsibility, but when programs across the country are being cut back for people who are not in prison, inmates and others who support inmates have to understand that restraint also has to be applied within the correctional service. Accordingly, the Minister is not prepared to defer his decision.

Finally, even though this funding is being cut, the Solicitor General believes that the inmates who have been benefiting from the programs will have the initiative to find other ways within our system to achieve a higher education.

FORESTRY—INQUIRY RESPECTING GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS
AND POLICIES

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, on October 27, 1982, I directed a question to the Minister of State for Economic Development (Mr. Johnston) regarding what plans the Government may have had for assisting unemployed people in the forest industry across the country, particularly action in terms of assisting both employees and the industry in which they normally work. I asked what proposals they were putting together to ensure that more of those people could be employed constructively during the spring just immediately ahead of us. The answer from the Minister at that time was most inadequate and very generalized. I hope this

evening we may have some clearer answers as to just what is taking place.

Under the Employment Bridging Assistance Program, we have had a series of problems. I know the Government is aware of these problems and has made some attempts to resolve them, and I refer to people being dropped from the UIC rolls as they enter EBAP. Sometimes their benefits are mysteriously stopped, as was the case for many last December, and are restarted after they have been enrolled in the program. This is causing some demoralization on the part of many unemployed forestry workers who were hoping to make contributions, not only to themselves but to the long-term welfare of their own industry. Why get off UIC with a regular cheque and go to something more constructive if one ends up with no income at all? They also have their families' interests to look after.

In my own constituency the Salmo Workers Employment Society was formed. In fact, it was the first program under EBAP in the forest industry in British Columbia. Over the past few months they have developed a considerable amount of expertise, with the continual employment, on a revolving basis, of some 50 unemployed woodworkers in a variety of projects. What they are concerned about now—and I suspect this will happen in many similar programs across the country—is that as their benefits expire they will no longer be eligible to stay on the program. While we have talked about NEED as a separate program to be utilized by people who run out of UIC benefits, we need a better system of integration so that we do not lose the potential worth and expertise these people have gained through some of the worth-while programs which have been conducted.

Unfortunately, in terms of numbers, we still have a problem. There is still a problem in that while there is an increasing emphasis by the federal Government on getting involved in some of the reforestation and forest management areas, recently the provincial Government, at least in British Columbia, cancelled and wiped out its long-term forest management program, despite the fact that there is a new forest subsidiary agreement between the federal Government and that Province. How do we guarantee in both situations that we come out of the downturn with a stronger resource base for the industry than we have had in the past, instead of making it worse as is now happening with many companies trying to highgrade the little timber we have left in some of our areas?

• (1825)

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has made a statement that the Employment Bridging Assistance Program has created only 15 per cent of the projected 10,000 jobs. I am pleased that he has given me the opportunity of correcting his statement on behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Ethier).

The Program has not yet run a full year but already it has produced more than 5,000 jobs in the forestry sector. Across the country we have approved 9,300 potential positions.