

Oral Questions

EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS BY CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION IN ONTARIO RIDINGS

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): My question is directed to the same Minister. The construction industry has an unemployment rate of 33 per cent. In Ontario it is 29 per cent, and many of the unemployed are young people. Why was 90 per cent of the CMHC funding under the slush fund spent in Liberal ridings? Why was it not distributed fairly across the country? Why did the Minister not address the needs of the unemployed, rather than the needs of the Liberal Party?

● (1500)

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. gentleman, as I said repeatedly, the funds were distributed equitably. I would remind the hon. gentlemen opposite who are so concerned about bias and patronage that it was the Leader of the Opposition who said that if he became Prime Minister it will be 15 years before a Liberal got a job, and if he became leader of the Government, it would be 15 years before a Liberal constituency got a project—

Mr. Mulroney: That is false.

Mr. Roberts:—not us on this side of the House; it was the Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I think from what we have seen today that it was the Minister's constituents who made the mistake when they gave him a job.

MEMBER'S TELEPHONE CALL TO MINISTER'S OFFICE

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, the Minister said numerous times today, and in the past, that the reason Conservative ridings have not received anything under this program is because we have not worked hard enough and have not applied.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Mr. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, when I did not have the criteria for this program I called the Minister's office in the first week in December. After being referred to six different people in that office we were advised by Mr. Len Westaburg that this program was one being developed by the previous Minister but since this Minister had come into office it had not yet been initiated, but when it was we would receive the information. If the Minister wants us to work hard and get these programs, could he tell me how I can apply for a program which has no criteria, no application forms and, in his own office, does not exist?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I suppose the best advice I could give to the hon. gentleman is that he should have consulted with his

colleague, the Hon. Member for Joliette, who said he was aware of the program and believed his colleagues were as well.

Mr. Speaker: Presenting reports from Standing and Special Committees. A point of order, the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath).

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. McGRATH—STATEMENT BY MR. ROBERTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Minister would deliberately mislead the House, but in the course of Question Period he quoted me as saying that at first glance the funds seemed to be equitably distributed. I did not say that. I said that, at first glance, the funds would seem to be disproportionately or inequitably distributed. That is my word, and I hope the Minister will accept it.

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): On the same point of order, Mr. speaker, I was quoting from a Canadian press report which said, and I quote exactly:

But after glancing at the resume of the information provided by Roberts' office, McGrath said it appears the job funds have been divided equitably.

The Hon. Member assures me he did not say that, and of course I accept his word.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PETITIONS

MR. LACHANCE—POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Mr. Claude-André Lachance (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present the following petition:

To the Honourable the House of Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Canada, concerned about justice and brotherhood among nations, who now avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in the certain assurance that your Honourable House will therefore provide a remedy.

Humbly sheweth that:

They urge the Canadian Government to share the concern and sincere anxiety of the 1,400 residents of Montreal Centre West who have sent to political prisoners in the Philippines a message of support in their struggle against poverty and repression;

That the Canadian Government end its economic, trade or other relations with the Philippines unless that country does restore human rights and democratic freedoms;