

the minister or his department accepted the projects presented to the federal government.

Later on we had answers such as this one: This project has been refused. A phone call to the department brought this reply: Certain funds earmarked for these projects have been spent and the total of these amounts exceeds the budget—a budget of \$50 million for the whole country. It so happened that many important local initiative projects were refused while others less important were accepted.

For example, the creation of snowmobile trails had been requested and certain municipalities or parishes asked for the improvement of community centers. All they wanted was money to pay the salaries since the materials would be supplied by the parish or municipality. This was rejected.

Substantial amounts of money were spent to create jobs and while these were being created the number of unemployed was going up. The reason given is that the number of people entering the labour market is increasing rapidly; so unemployment goes up and at the same time the government tells us it is creating new jobs.

It may be true that new jobs became available because in February, for example, I saw men cutting branches in three or four feet of snow. Our unemployed were in the snow right up to the belt cutting branches. They had to dig to cut branches. It is obvious that the branches will be growing again this spring and that next winter this will provide other jobs.

However, when I saw those unemployed working in temperatures of 25, 30 or 35 degrees below zero I thought it might be wise for the government to undertake, next winter, another local initiatives program to allow these people to work in a heated place, for example, by buying balls of wool and knitting needles and having them knit mittens. There are not enough mittens in politics. We need more.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that we probably need a new minister, a minister of balls of wool to ensure fair distribution to those who want to knit. They could knit in a heated place. This would be as intelligent as having them cut branches in the middle of winter.

I think the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has not yet thought of it. In the coming election campaign we will see if he does not promise us a department of balls of wool and knitting needles to take care of the jobless next winter.

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Would the hon. member allow me a question? Would he make a suggestion to the government?

Mr. Caouette: No, but I am ready to suggest the replacement of our present crazy system. My suggestion would be as crazy, but not more.

Mr. Speaker, important projects have been rejected while, I repeat, others which were unimportant were accepted. Who made the decisions?

Some municipalities, for instance, are told: Your project has a fair chance of being accepted. A building project of sorts is then submitted to the Minister of Municipal

Control of Government Expenditures

Affairs providing that the government would pay the salaries involved. The municipality concerned is given to understand that the federal government will accept the project. The provincial government gives the go ahead and subsequently an architect is hired. The plans are drawn at a cost of \$10,000 to \$12,000 which the municipality is called upon to disburse. The plan is then submitted to the provincial government and the minister declares that it is accepted and that it should be immediately forwarded to Ottawa. Two or three weeks elapse—these things take time—after which Ottawa decides to reject the project. The municipality is then compelled to pay \$12,000 to an architect for a project that has been rejected. The government does not contribute a cent. That is, once again, a brilliant system: Parishes and municipalities are compelled to run into debts and pay the salaries of architects whom they are obliged, by provincial laws, to hire. This is done with a promise that the project will be accepted, but then it is rejected.

• (1610)

Only recently, I was talking to officials of the department responsible for the Local Initiatives Program, and they admitted to having gone over the budget. They have spent \$15 million already, and the minister says he is not going to add a penny.

Mr. Speaker, since we have established a Local Initiatives Program, let us at least respect the projects which make sense. Let us not make petty excuses and say that all the money has been spent. Let us create a budget!

Yesterday we were presented with a \$219 million budget designed to make up for the deficits of the Canadian National Railways and Air Canada. Strangely enough, we will manage to find the money! Why cannot we do the same thing for serious local initiatives projects—not, of course, for revolutionaries and rebels!

There is a local initiatives project in Mont-Laurier, for instance, where the FLQ leader Pierre Vallières, who has now been released from jail, has been hired, even though he said: I will never stop working towards the separation of Quebec.

That same night, the former Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) stated humbly in a television broadcast in Montreal that Pierre Vallières had a right to work. I do not question this right, but let him go and work for René Lévesque—not for the federal government.

Vallières is paid with the Canadian people's money for working towards the destruction of Canada, towards getting Quebec out of the Canadian Confederation. Where do they send him? To the poor people in Mont-Laurier, so that he can see whether it is true that there are poor people there, and why and how they are poor, and so he can give them advice: You know, fellows, the reason you are poor is because of Ottawa. If you were on René Lévesque's side in order to make the separation of Quebec come about sooner, you would be a little poorer but it would not show so much. This way he tries to stir up people against the country. Ottawa does not raise any objections. They say: It is a Mr. De Serres who is responsible for the project—another notorious separatist, another man who is openly anti-Canadian. And this project gets \$46,000 or \$48,000 from the federal government.