

Government acting alone but through co-operative action in our communities that we are best able to respond to the problems of youth employment. I am very much aware of what has been done.

As I indicated in my speech, we are now considering the possible allocation of the \$150 million of new funds which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) has allotted to us in the Budget. In the process of reflecting on the ways in which that funding can be used most effectively, we are reviewing the community-oriented programs and making the kind of reassessment he has asked of us.

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister about the local advisory boards. I found that in my riding they were incredibly effective. I took the attitude, after 1979 when I was elected and again after 1980, what I was elected to represent all the constituents, whether they had voted Liberal, NDP, Conservative, or otherwise. When the money was allocated to the riding by setting up a local advisory board which drew on all sectors of the community, the old, the young and the handicapped, we found that the decisions they made were very wise and with no sense of partisanship at all. More recently, decisions are made by officials. I think there is an increasing worry about that, and I want to put in a word to the Minister to ask him to consider reinstating the local advisory boards for those of us who feel we do represent Liberals, New Democrats and others after an election is over.

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, there is not a great deal I can add to my previous answer. I think the attitude which the Hon. Member has shown is exactly the one that I would hope would characterize moving back in that direction. I think indeed most Members would express and share the kinds of opinions that he has voiced. I think I would be reluctant to impose it as a mechanism. But I think the Hon. Member was suggesting it should be optional, at the discretion of the Member. I cannot give the Hon. Member a definitive answer today because the review is taking place. I have already indicated my sympathy for this approach. It is indeed the kind that I myself supported when I was not the Minister in this portfolio but had responsibilities as a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Kristiansen: Mr. Speaker, I have a question which is supplementary to the last two questions posed by the Hon. Member for Dauphin (Mr. Lewycky) and the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker). I want to endorse what they have said about local advisory boards.

The Minister has said he would like to provide for some discretion for local advisory boards. That exists now, except that in my own case it is now up to the individual M.P. to cover the cost of travelling and meals. This I do quite gladly. I would rather do that than make unilateral decisions which can end up being either unproductive or cause division rather than unification within a community.

Aside from that, there is a directive which my constituency office was advised of today. This directive requires the constituencies' or the Members' final answer, to go along with the

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Minister's approval, by March 20. We got that information on the telephone today. Apparently this is a departmental directive that really does not allow much time or notice. Members of Parliament and people in our communities who may be involved in advisory boards have busy schedules too. I understand the necessity for speed because Summer Canada project employment has to start April 30 or shortly following. I hope the Minister will allow us a little more discretion, at least a week or so beyond this arbitrary deadline of March 20. Within a matter of two weeks we must have an answer and check out all the various groups within our community and see about the proper allocation of funds so that we can make rational decisions with some community input.

Could I have some assurance from the Minister that we may have a little bit of flexibility that accords us our due as well?

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I was going to make the first point myself which the Hon. Member made. There are many Members, at least I know there are many on this side of the House, such as my colleague from Thunder Bay, who do avail themselves now of an advisory group in an informal way. I think many Members do. I assume that the question was whether that informal process could be converted into a formal process with some degree of support. To be entirely frank with the Hon. Member, I did not realize the calls and gone out today establishing March 20 as a deadline. That does still give two weeks for the forwarding of the recommendations to me. I would not want to vary that date without seeing if there is not some very good reason for having brought it forward that quickly. Clearly, as the Hon. Member indicated in his remarks, we have to take decisions fairly promptly if projects are to go into place for the time when they are needed, that is, moving from April on for the summer employment period. I cannot give him quite as strong a response as he would like such as to guarantee him more flexibility, but I will guarantee to the Hon. Member that I will look into the matter in the interest of trying to find more flexibility.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I used the advisory committee for two or three years. I found the travel in a constituency as big as Bow River was very expensive. Also there was the diversity of industry to consider. For instance, Banff and Lake Louise have tourism. Right down the boundary there is ranching, coal mining, grain-growing, manufacturing, and hog-raising, etc. I found it was difficult to find people who had any knowledge of the other end, or the other side, of the constituency. I did, however, manage to resolve the matter. Civil servants have been very co-operative. I arranged for my executive assistant to sit in on meetings once or twice a year, and together go over all items. My executive assistant has a good knowledge of the entire constituency. I have been most impressed by the fairness with which the civil servants try to administer these funds. I like that very much.

One thing, however, does bother me, particularly as it concerns the Canada Works funds. We have so much advertising and, as a result, we get 15 or 25 applications, all worth-