

Oral Questions

Will the Minister tell this House how we can believe one word in the Budget tomorrow? How can we believe the Government when it says it is going to spend more on employment projects? How can we not believe the money that was not spent this year is being recycled? Can the Minister tell the House how he and his Government have any credibility left at all? Their reputation for honesty and competence is completely gone.

● (1430)

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the information is readily available to the Member opposite if he would take the trouble to inform himself. There is a document issued by the Special Recovery Capital Projects Board. It is a periodic status report up-date. The last one was issued on February 2. The Member opposite will find all the information that he requires in that document.

If that is not sufficient, the Special Recovery Capital Projects master list which is up-dated every so often, the last one being issued in November, sets forth in great detail the current status and the spending on each of the accelerated projects.

SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES PROGRAM—PRODUCTION OF PROJECTS LIST

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I want to pursue the cover-up that the Minister of Employment and Immigration has been having with regard to the Special Employment Initiatives Program. I want to ask him why it was—

Mr. Dingwall: Sit down.

Miss MacDonald: There are Liberal Members who are shouting "sit down".

Mr. Dingwall: You do not make sense.

Miss MacDonald: The reason is that they do not want to hear what it is that is coming out of their program.

On November 24 last, in committee, the Minister's officials said that they were able to provide the list of projects by province and give it to members of the committee. It was confirmed by the chairman of the committee that that information would be available. Why were the officials able to provide that list the day after, and the Minister has muzzled them for three months since that time? Why has he held up that information?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it really does seem bizarre for the Hon. Member to be accusing me of a cover-up. Last week in the House, as I have seen from reading *Hansard*, and if I remember correctly, she and her colleague, the Hon. Member for Rosedale, were asking for me to table the list and give them this information. That is exactly what I have agreed to do. I do not know how I can be accused of covering up when I have

decided to do exactly what it is that they have asked me to do in the House.

The information for which she has asked will be provided to her in as updated fashion as possible, and as clearly as possible. I gave my commitment to the House, which I take very seriously, that I will do that by early next week.

Miss MacDonald: The procrastination of the Government in everything that it undertakes is evident in the way it has refused to produce this list. It has taken three months to do, or even to face up to something that could have been done in three days.

NOTIFICATION OF PROGRAM CRITERIA

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have one further question for the Minister concerning this program. On November 29 the Minister said to Members of the House in committee:

There is really only one thing I can say to you: When you receive the criteria, if you believe there are some useful projects in your area which would meet the criteria, you send me the suggestions and I will consider them.

"When we receive the criteria". Why did he hold the criteria up for three months?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I explained to Members in the House yesterday, and I say it with some regret since I wish the criteria had been provided more quickly to Hon. Members, that when I asked for the criteria to be prepared I did not feel that it was put forward in a fashion which would make it easy for Members opposite to understand what the criteria were. I emphasized in the committee that the criteria were supple, flexible, and wide-ranging. All of that was presented in the committee.

The revised exposition of the criteria was available for me when we returned from our Christmas break, and fairly soon after that it was presented to Members of the House. I regret the delay, and if one wants to accuse me of being fallible from that point of view, I accept that criticism. It was not with any intention of depriving Members of the Opposition, and certainly not muzzling my civil servants.

Indeed, since we have received some suggestions and proposals from Members opposite, I think there is some evidence that they do not feel they were deprived of an ability to make suggestions for projects to be funded under the scheme because they did not have as precise details as they would have wished.

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NATIONAL REVENUE

REQUEST FOR INQUIRY INTO VANCOUVER OFFICE PRACTICES

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Last week I revealed that in the Vancouver Regional Office of