

women's Outreach programs and in particular why the Aware project in New Westminster was encouraged to develop and then, several months later, told that no funds were available?

Mr. Axworthy: On the matter of the Outreach programs, Mr. Chairman, the first step was to re-establish the financing commitment to the \$9.7 million level so that we really put back about \$1.3 million into the program.

Second, I asked the department to freeze applications for that money. At that point, close to 50 per cent or 60 per cent were going to native Outreach programs and I wanted to change the percentage to give more emphasis to women's projects. At the present time there are 19 projects dealing with the employment concerns of women across Canada, and about five or six more are under consideration. This was simply to catch up to the very low level of the previous year. We have encouraged the women counsellors in the regional offices to develop new projects and several are coming on stream. To the extent that they are valuable contributions and break new ground, we will consider them. The funding is pretty well exhausted this year because much of the total allocation has already been made but I believe some are left which are being allocated primarily to women's projects.

As for the specific Aware program she mentioned, I will check on the details and respond to the hon. member in writing.

The Chairman: The hon. member for New Westminster-Coquitlam has one minute left.

Miss Jewett: As I mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the minister's letter about the specific project in my constituency reached me only today so I would appreciate hearing from him about it.

May I return to a comment the minister made about the affirmative action program? There was a good deal of discussion earlier today about affirmative action in the public sector so I shall not go over that ground again.

The minister made a passing comment about encouraging affirmative action programs in the private sector. Someone said the government had \$7 billion in contracts but I understand that the government has purchased \$11 billion from private companies. If there were affirmative action programs in all those companies you would really get some fast action. I gather that the government is still operating on the voluntary system whereby companies may or may not start an affirmative action program. Several months ago the minister said this did not seem to be working very well. I think he said that in committee. He said he would seriously consider making it mandatory. He mentioned that it seems to be stronger in the United States. It certainly does.

The Chairman: I regret to interrupt the hon. member but she has already exceeded her time. She may continue with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Supply

Some hon. Members: No.

● (2140)

[Translation]

Mr. Dion: Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to have this opportunity of speaking to a subject that concerns me greatly, as it does also my colleagues, and that is the job-creation policies of our government. On June 2, the Minister of Employment and Immigration announced his program to stimulate employment in the 1980s. At that time he announced a whole series of programs that would affect directly the unemployed Canadians and lay greater emphasis on those groups most severely affected by unemployment, namely, women, the native peoples and the young.

Mr. Chairman, the riding of Portneuf, which I represent here in the House, also feels the effects of the economic recession that is being experienced not only in Canada but also next door in the United States. The riding of Portneuf comprises 43 municipalities that are wholly rural, semi-rural and urban. Its economy is based mainly on agriculture which represents 40 per cent of its income. Farming is particularly successful in the north and northwest parts of Portneuf. In the south, economic development depends mostly on small and medium businesses, and that despite the fact that this is where are located two main industries in Portneuf, namely, Domtar at Donnacona and Ciment Québec at Saint-Basile.

In the area comprising the municipalities of Val-Bélair, Neufchatel, Shannon and Saint-Augustin, the main industries are the military base at Valcartier, Valcartier Industries, the National Defence Research Centre and the industrial park of Saint-Augustin which regroups the small and medium businesses located in the vicinity of Quebec City.

That indeed shows, Mr. Chairman, how vast the Portneuf riding is and how diversified its development has been. We therefore welcome the policies announced by the minister, and I myself am particularly interested in them. I want to thank and congratulate the minister for extending the youth employment programs and also for announcing and implementing the community development programs, which, obviously, have had a wide success in my area.

There is, however, one thing in my opinion, and in the opinion of all my colleagues no doubt, that should be improved upon and that is that the funds provided for these programs are insufficient and should be increased. In Portneuf, we have been allocated a total of \$627,000 for these programs but, and I ask the minister to take note, we have received applications for over \$3.5 million.

Since the inception of these programs, in the seventies, Portneuf has received some \$7 million in federal grants and these have been put to good use. These federal government programs are very popular in my area. Also, in urban and semi-urban ridings which have 40-odd municipalities, like