

Oral Questions

there. They were aquiver with expectation. They were energetic. They were anxious to bring forward projects, but they waited for the criteria to come down. They would come down for breakfast and say: "Are the criteria out?" "No, not today. We will wait until tomorrow." The next day they would come down and say: "Are the criteria out yet? We have projects. No, not today." The next day they said: "Are the criteria there? No, not today." It went on for days. It stretched into weeks, then months, then years, before they got the criteria. What did they do? They sat there for two years until last week to say: "We really want to have those criteria". Is that what they call a diligent exercise of their responsibilities on behalf of their constituents?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I might point out to the Minister—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Forrestall: As Donald MacInnis would have said, we will wait for the snake pit to quiet down.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Forrestall: I have lots of time. I would like to point out a couple of things to the Minister. I am talking about the Special Employment Initiatives Program, not the Special Recovery, the rapid recovery and all. You want to know about the \$3 million I got. I got that in exchange for an \$18 million nautical institute stolen from me, stolen from the people of Dartmouth, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Employment and Immigration tell me why the Government in all of the secretiveness, quietness, and hidden procedures—I do not mind not getting any money particularly, but I tell you what I do object to, I object, in the middle of all that is going on, secretly, behind people's backs, to the Government taking away funding from an affirmative action program that was designed to help young black women enter the labour force or re-enter it if they had had to leave it—why the government cut out that funding to give to Cape Breton Members funds that could be used to help these people?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in every single one of these Special Projects direct job-creation functions, whether it is winter works, NEED, Summer Canada, the Community Development Program, Special Employment Initiatives, or Section 38,

the proportion of funding flowing to Nova Scotia is well above that which it would be theoretically entitled to on the basis of its level of unemployment in Canada—well above it. I am surprised that the Hon. Member, as a Member of Parliament, with the interests of Nova Scotia at heart, should really object to that situation. He has mentioned a specific project—and I have to say to him that I am not aware of that project.

Mr. McDermid: You are too busy with Cape Breton.

Mr. Roberts: I would be very happy to look into that project. There is still a considerable amount of funding available under the Special Employment Initiatives Program. If he wishes to recommend that project to me, I would be very happy to look at it thoroughly, carefully, and conscientiously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

APPLICATION MADE FOR DISABLED CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same Minister, concerning the same Employment Initiatives Program. Last November 29 I wrote to the Minister responsible for disabled persons asking him if there were any moneys available to upgrade a school playground for disabled kids. That was last November 29. Last week the Minister wrote back and said if there are any moneys available under the federal Departments, I am afraid there is no program within my Department with a mandate to provide funding for capital expenditures" for this purpose. At the same time the Hon. Member for Kitchener received a grant from that Minister's Department under that program. What is the difference between a disabled child who happens to live in Kitchener and any other disabled child in this country?

● (1440)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it may be that I did not hear the Hon. Member correctly. If so, I apologize. I thought I heard him say that he wrote to the Minister responsible for disabled people. I assume he meant he wrote to me.

Mr. Young: No.

Mr. Roberts: If he did not write to me, then I am afraid, at least off hand, I am not aware of that specific item of correspondence which I gather was directed to another Minister. If he is asking about the reply of another Minister to him, I am afraid I cannot help him without undertaking some investigation to find out what was the content of the reply and what, if any, was the distinction between the two cases.

GRANT MADE TO KITCHENER RIDING PROJECT

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Immigration has told the House repeatedly in the last couple of weeks that he discussed this question in his