

have been giving consideration to whether more information should be given to the public in respect of the program. There seems to be a good deal of misunderstanding, if not confusion in the minds of Ontarians in particular. This came up in a report over the weekend and indicated that many Ontarians believe that the federal government cancelled this most important program. What they were in fact confused about was their understanding of an announcement by the Ontario government which cancelled its particular program. The federal government's program has not been cancelled in any way.

HOME INSULATION PROGRAM—POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING FUNDING OF RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I would direct my question to the same minister. In view of the fact there have been so few applications approved under the home insulation program, would he not recognize that the program is not reaching those people who cannot afford any type of home repairs or rehabilitation in order to take advantage of the insulation program? Has he discussed with his colleague, the Minister of States for Urban Affairs, increasing the funding under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program which would meet the requirements of those people who cannot now save in respect of fuel through insulation?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is confusing applications on the one hand with grants on the other. If he were to review the program he would see that the system set up under the Canadian home insulation program requires the individual to have put his insulation in place before he gets a grant for that expenditure. There have been something like 60,000 applications. There have been something in the order of just about 3,000 specific applications relating to insulation that has already been put in place. I would expect that will increase very considerably, because, as the hon. member might expect, there has been something of the order of a two-month lead time. You have to buy the insulation first before you can expect to get a cheque.

Mr. Marshall: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the minister understands that there are people in a fixed income bracket who do not have proper walls, do not have proper windows or proper basements in their homes so that insulation would be of no benefit. Under RRAP, these conditions could be met and these people could obtain the full value of the insulation. Would the minister discuss with his colleague the introduction or the expansion of funding under RRAP, which is an excellent program, in order to provide help to those people who need this insulation, but who cannot afford it otherwise?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member understands that the Minister of State for Urban Affairs is fully aware of this particular option, and that this particular option has been used in the past.

Oral Questions

MANPOWER

MEASURES TO AID THOSE UNEMPLOYED FOR MORE THAN THREE MONTHS

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, last Monday I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration a question concerning his department and was accused of being fast and loose with figures and of spreading malicious and imprecise information.

An hon. Member: That is true.

Mr. Clarke: However that may be, Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister another serious question concerning his department. I hope he will try to answer it this time instead of giving us these statements.

With the failure of the government's economic policy to reduce unemployment, and with the growing number, now 36 per cent, of persons unemployed being out of work over three months, which would indicate that the number with expired benefits will be at record levels, what measures will the government be putting into place to provide relief for this disadvantaged group?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I did not know the hon. member was so sensitive to honest political criticism of some of the comments he made using words like "deficit" when he knew the word "deficit" was not applicable in that particular framework, Mr. Speaker.

I think it is incorrect to say we have failed in the creation of jobs. Since January, 1977, some 292,000 more Canadians are working than at the beginning of the year, and there are, I think, 116,000 who have received employment under Canada Works, to mention only two areas, Mr. Speaker, which indicates that some action has taken place. More has to be done and that is why we are looking at things like job experience training and the possibility of expanding that particular program as one of a series of programs.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his non-answer again, because he completely ignores the plight of the people I mentioned, namely, those who have been unemployed for over three months and are in danger of losing their benefits. I should like to ask whether this is the beginning of the government's plan to transfer this burden to the provinces and avoid the federal government's responsibility?

Mr. Cullen: Very definitely not, Mr. Speaker, and that is specifically one of the reasons I will be meeting with the ministers from the Atlantic provinces, to look into that particular program. When I indicated the jobs under Canada Works, I had in mind that it was those who are no longer able to draw unemployment insurance benefits who can take advantage of the Canada Works program and programs of that nature to help them with this particular problem. To suggest that nothing is being done, again is not exactly in accordance with the facts.