

*Supply*

This is truly rebuilding Canada from the grassroots up, rebuilding Canada in a democratic and equal way across the country.

There is also a responsibility in this program for every member of the House. Members can discuss with their town and city councils their local priorities, their local needs so they understand them and give them the support they can.

People will ask what infrastructure is. By agreement with each of the provinces it has been defined as the physical capital assets of our communities. That means the physical capital assets of the nation, with an emphasis on physical infrastructure associated with municipal services at the local level, things like water treatment, water distribution systems, sewage and drainage, roads and other transport facilities, buildings, machinery, equipment, earth works, related construction activities.

It can go further. The program has the flexibility to include smart infrastructure such as information highways or social, cultural and other economic priorities.

We have heard a great deal about government getting out of the way of businesses. A number of members of the House are obviously not aware that this program has the endorsement of the industry associations that will be involved in doing this work. The government does not go out and build roads and bridges. Companies across the country go out and build roads and bridges. We are giving them the opportunity to work again.

We hear a great deal from the opposition about listening to people and representing our constituents. Therefore I find it hard to understand why parts of the opposition have so much trouble listening to the people and the level of government that is closest to those constituents in their local towns, villages, townships and counties. These are the people who for 10 years have been asking their national government to take the leadership to bring all three levels of government together to rebuild the infrastructure of Canada. They continue to be strong supporters of the program, as do the business associations that will be involved in implementing the program.

● (1235)

The framework agreements specify the criteria that must be met for project approval: incremental and/or acceleration of investment; short and long term job creation; enhancing Canada's economic competitiveness; use of sound, innovative, smart technologies; bringing infrastructure up to community standards. Also included in the criteria are: codes and bylaws; enhancing long term skills in the workforce; enhancing environmental quality and sustainability; the use of sound, innovative,

financial techniques, including the use of private capital and distribution of program benefits within a province or territory.

Yes, there will be an evaluation component so that when we reach the end of the program and as it proceeds we will know what it is accomplishing. This program will put people back to work this construction season. We will see 50,000 to 65,000 direct jobs and many more indirect jobs as suddenly construction workers and others in related industries have money in their pockets. They will have the money to go out and buy goods and services and to contribute to the public treasury as well.

A great deal of the initial \$2 billion investment we have made will come right back to the government and to the people of Canada through the contributions of those people who are now working on this program instead of being unemployed.

From across the House we also hear a disparagement of construction jobs as if these are only old style job creation schemes and not real work for people. I am sorry, but somebody who digs a ditch, who operates a crane, who moves cement blocks, who puts a trowel to bricks is doing valuable, important and constructive work for this nation. We are proud of the jobs we are going to be creating. The people who will have those jobs will be proud of them.

We have heard that unemployment figures are up. Unemployment figures are up because this among other programs is bringing hope back to the country. People who have kept away from the job market are coming back because they believe now, with a new government in place, there may be a job for them.

The government believes it should keep its promises and put Canadians back to work. We ask for support, not criticism, from the other side of the House as we try to do that. By launching this infrastructure program we are helping the economic growth, helping Canadians get back to work and helping to reduce our deficit.

I truly hope that when motions come forward from the opposition, if they cannot be totally laudatory of our programs at least they might be more constructive.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my Liberal colleague's speech and there are a few comments I would like to make.

First a general comment followed by a case in point. This government does not promote job creation as it said it would during the 45 days of the election campaign, and in its now defunct red book. I think the red book can be thrown out, considering the latest Budget brought down by the Minister of Finance.

Of course, the infrastructure program will create between 45,000 and 60,000 jobs, depending on whom you talk to. However, what are 45,000 jobs, compared with 1.5 million