

*Adjournment Debate*

In large measure the solutions to reduced oil dependence must be supported by co-ordination within the region itself. The initiatives of New Brunswick in negotiating contracts to import hydro-generated electricity from Quebec are an example of this. More generally, the federal government has indicated a willingness in principle to provide financial support for the development of a broader degree of regional co-ordination and planning through the Maritime Energy Corporation, but it is disappointing that this opportunity has not made greater progress. Clearly the Atlantic provinces should, in their own interest, attempt to achieve the highest degree of co-ordination so that the disadvantages of smaller scale systems and generating facilities are reduced to a minimum and so that through co-operative effort the displacement of oil-fired electricity generation takes place as rapidly as possible.

● (2225)

In Newfoundland the dependence on oil for electricity generation is less significant at the moment, with only 16 per cent of production for provincial needs coming from oil. The concern is that this dependence is likely to grow because the more economic hydro resources on the island of Newfoundland have already been developed. For this reason the federal government agreed in 1978 to become a partner in a joint federal-provincial enterprise, the Lower Churchill Development Corporation, which was charged with the responsibility of developing proposals for hydroelectric development in Labrador and the transmission of electricity between Labrador and Newfoundland.

The policy of the previous government, which would have imposed much higher prices for oil on the consumers of Atlantic Canada, also would necessarily have involved a greater palliative.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his allotted three minutes have expired.

EMPLOYMENT—SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS—  
REASON FOR DELAY IN APPROVING APPLICATIONS

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill):** Mr. Speaker, I sought to follow up my question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) of May 22 because the answer which I received from him on that occasion did not do justice to the spirit in which the question was originally asked, and because it did not do justice to the facts.

I rose in my place to ask the minister whether there were any pending announcements which would explain the delay which groups seeking funding under the summer youth employment program were experiencing. I knew of these delays because I had been telephoned by a group, not from my own riding but from a riding represented by a Manitoba Conservative member, a point which will be worth remembering when I get to the minister's comments on the alleged relation of NDP members of Parliament to the delay.

So, after being notified of the delay, I asked if an announcement was coming, not an announcement of who was to be funded but an announcement on a change of the program which would both explain and justify the delay.

Instead, the minister replied, first, that the announcement of funding was coming and that "there really is no delay." Yet the group I talked to expected to hear on April 30 whether they were to start some time after May 5 with their funding. They were concerned that people who lined up for this date would begin to look elsewhere for work. The minister said there was no delay and that his department was aiming at a May 15 target date, consistent with the schedule he announced in a press release some time in early April. In fact that press release of April 3 gives not indication of any time frame.

First, there was no delay, according to the minister's first answer, but then in the answer to the supplementary question, after being pressed a bit, the minister admitted that he was having problems. However, instead of telling the House why, and acting as a minister of the Crown should, he slipped into that petty, partisan attitude for which he is so famous and tried to take a cheap shot at the NDP, that party which he so despises for actually believing in justice and for having credibility in areas of concern in which he so futilely tried to get the Liberal party interested. Here I give the minister the benefit of the doubt, granting him status as a sincere eunuch in a harem that will yet be the ruin of him, a harem which ignores his public pleas, and one hopes there are private pleas, for rail relocation, among other things.

In a letter originally sent to members of Parliament asking them if they wished to recommend projects for their ridings, the minister said that if he did not hear from us by a date several days before my question in the House, he would proceed. In fact he did hear from us collectively and individually as we severally asked that our input be taken more seriously and not second guessed by a Liberal patronage committee, and that we be allowed to return to a system where community advisory committees had a significant say in what was to be funded and what was not.

● (2230)

The minister said in the House on the same day as my question on another occasion on the same subject, that New Democrats did not have the same respect for the role of a member of Parliament because we would not adjudicate projects the way the minister had suggested. We have more respect, not less, for the role of member of Parliament because we do not try to play God as members of Parliament. However, it is not surprising that the minister, a Liberal, should say this about the role of a member of Parliament, for that is really all that Liberal members of Parliament have ever been about, the dispensing of government money.

My question remains. Many groups are still waiting to hear about their funding. It is now 11 days since I asked my question in the House of Commons. I await an answer, and an explanation of this increasingly mysterious delay. I await an indication of whether the minister and his department intend