

Adjournment Debate

good that some programs for regional development and expansion have done. In other words, there is a contradiction inherent in the government's national fiscal and monetary policy and in its regional development policies.

I include the government's manpower policies in this general inconsistent behaviour toward the Atlantic region, so many areas of which are floundering on the shoals of lack of job opportunities. What I say is also true to some extent regarding the government's training and retraining programs which, in part, have become another form of welfare, of band-aid help which is not effective enough to meet the needs of regional structural changes which are necessary if there is to be reconstruction of the economy and sustained employment in that region.

It is time for all politicians of the Atlantic region to stop fooling the people in Atlantic Canada about two things. Let them not give the people exaggerated impressions to the effect that income and employment prospects from off-shore oil exploration will make much difference to the region. Second, let them not hold out the forlorn hope that Fundy tidal power is being seriously considered by this government as part of the answer for meeting Canada's energy needs in the next decade.

Let them, Mr. Speaker, develop a serious plan for the Atlantic Region which will take advantage of our geographical position, an advantage which has come about because of changing technology in transportation, and which has changed our relationships with the markets of the world. I am referring to the development of our container ports and our deep water ports. There are two in eastern Nova Scotia, and one of those, Gabarous, is in my riding. The site has been recommended by steel experts who have studied the subject for DREE as a prime site for a labor intensive steel complex.

I hope such developments will be included in a new redevelopment policy and plan which will also redevelop the basic resources of the Atlantic region and thus provide a real answer to the problems which have plagued Atlantic Canada for at least half a century.

Mr. William Rompkey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in response to the question by the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Hogan) on October 8, let me begin, as he did, by referring to the community employment strategy, which is a long-term plan, as he indicated, to combat the problems of the chronically unemployed or under-employed.

The hon. member expanded on the terms of reference of the original question and referred in a broad sense to government policies. It is impossible in three minutes to speak of the impact of DREE on the Atlantic Region, although, without question, DREE has been successful in creating many jobs. Tonight I can only speak on behalf of the Department of Manpower.

Let me begin by talking of the community employment strategy which is aimed at helping specific groups which experience particular difficulty in keeping and finding regular employment. Some of these are the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded, socially handicapped,

ex-inmates of mental or correctional institutions, people living in areas of chronic unemployment, and single parents. In the Atlantic area we know particularly of those in the second last category, people living in areas of chronic unemployment.

● (2220)

This program is being developed in conjunction with National Health and Welfare. Indeed, it is as a result of the policy paper the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) put out last year. One important aspect of it is that it attempts to involve the community in the definition and, indeed, the resolution of their specific problem. To my mind, that is a departure from what we have been doing up until this time. It will tell the community of the impact of our present programs on them and, together with them, try to seek answers to improve those programs and the employment situation in a particular community.

This is a long-range plan. It is one worth undertaking. It will have beneficial effects. However, it in no way indicates that there is any lack of appreciation or emphasis on our present programs or ongoing activities. We want to emphasize the extensive efforts that have already been made by Canada Manpower to reduce unemployment.

The hon. member referred to the Canada Manpower training program. He called into question its effects. I believe that program is certainly worthwhile. The hon. member will agree that in this time of rapid change it is very important that we keep our skilled people up to date. Canadian workers change jobs many times during their careers. It is incumbent upon us to provide continuously educational opportunities for them as they do this.

The \$2 billion spent on training programs in the past represents a very successful investment. We have reorganized Manpower Placement Services. I can tell the hon. member that in my own area of Atlantic Canada, for example in my constituency, there has been a decentralization of Manpower services over the past year or 18 months. In my opinion this is of great benefit in meeting the local placement needs.

The department instituted a system of farm labour pools which was designed to ensure that crop harvests are not hindered by inadequate labour supplies.

The hon. member also referred to the short-term job creation program that had been recognized nationally, the local initiatives program. There is certainly agreement that LIP is not the answer to long-term unemployment. It was not designed for that purpose. It has been continually modified since its inception, and will be continually modified during the progress of this parliament, in consultation with members on both sides of the House. We regard this as important and effective. What I like better is the Local Employment Assistance Program which, I feel, has a long-term effect on many areas of unemployment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret I have to interrupt the hon. member because the time allotted to him has expired. The motion to adjourn this House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.