

Adjournment Debate

I am therefore asking the minister's representative this evening whether, with respect to Canada Works, the department would not consider working through the regional districts or municipal councils. We very much need a constitutional change which will give the municipal level of government a share of tax revenue and an almost sovereign power in disposing of it. Such revenues would have to be provided as of right, and not turned off or on at the whim of senior governments, particularly the federal government. Conscientious municipalities which plan for the long range are confused and often find their programs disrupted by free wheeling advertising which artificially raises hopes, as was the case in the advertising campaign conducted on behalf of Canada Works just one month or so ago.

[Translation]

Mr. Arthur Portelance (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I shall not have enough time to answer all the questions asked by the hon. member this evening. However, in answer to the question of the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay (Mr. Johnston), I would like to say that we should perhaps consider briefly the objectives of the Canada Works program. This program has been established to neutralize cyclical, seasonal and regional unemployment on a permanent basis and throughout the year. The projects must be sponsored essentially by registered and well established organizations, and they must meet the needs of the working force in the community; they should not force people out on the labour market nor impede private initiatives. Finally, and this is the main requirement, the proposed activities should not be dependent in any way on the community.

I am sure the hon. member will understand that to fight unemployment effectively, the persons hired for Canada Works projects should be unemployed. It would be very difficult to determine to what extent the unemployment rate could be lowered by hiring people for these projects who already work for the groups or organizations concerned. The

reason is that we could not pretend these employees were about to lose their jobs. In other words, Mr. Speaker, if we were that flexible in our hiring practices, some would be prepared to wipe out the results we try to get through the Canada Works program by making use of the system.

Let us suppose that a sponsor fires employees so that they would be eligible for some Canada Works project as unemployed persons; nothing allows us to believe that once registered with the Canada Manpower Centre, they would necessarily be proposed for that project. When introducing applicants for a job, Canada Manpower Centres take into account the personality and the needs of everyone. In addition, they give priority to those eligible applicants who have been registered for a longer time.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member also indicated that we should examine again the allocation granted to the riding of Okanagan-Kootenay, as was the case with Okanagan Boundary. Mr. Speaker, concerning the riding of Okanagan Boundary, I must say that officials have examined this case to determine whether it had been mistakenly excluded from ridings where projects were eligible for a subsidy to offset high equipment costs. It has since been confirmed that Okanagan Boundary did not meet the eligibility requirements. However, no money allotment has been reconsidered and we do not intend to do so for any riding, for I am convinced that these funds were allocated as fairly as possible, particularly within areas facing high unemployment rates.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced of the merits of programs which, like the Canada Works Program, create new jobs in areas where they are most needed, because not only will these jobs lower the unemployment rate in these areas, but they will also promote the development of these areas through community betterment projects.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.28 p.m.