

Supply

with the labour-adjustment programs administered by the Employment and Immigration and Labour Departments. In effect, there was a continuing level. However, as we well know, at this point in time it is impossible to implement that because under the changes brought about in last November's statement many of the positive parts of the IRDP which would allow a community to reinvest into industry or to carry out the type of work which was envisioned under the original IRDP were eliminated.

● (1710)

I thank the Hon. Member. I know that my time has expired. Not only did the Government get rid of the CIRB program but it totally emasculated the IRDP, which could have been used as part of an industrial adjustment system in communities where it was needed. In a sense, the Government took two programs and put them out of commission. This left the federal Government totally without any type of arsenal of weapons to bring to bear on the type of changes about which we are talking.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) mentioned that I was out of the House. I had to leave on an urgent matter. However, I caught a glimpse of the Hon. Member on television while he was mentioning that if we wanted to recycle these workers the level of unemployment would have to be around 7 per cent or 8 per cent. I find that to be a pertinent point. In the riding of Sherbrooke it was always around 12 per cent and 15 per cent before the election and for a couple of years prior. However, since September of 1984 I wish to give the Hon. Member the good news. It is 8 per cent now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Charest: The bad news is that it had nothing to do with the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. If the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry would like to respond I will give him the 30 seconds which remain.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I would be more than delighted to respond. I think the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke needs one small lesson in economics. It is called time lag.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: The Conservatives laugh. That is because they simply show their ignorance. The fact of the matter is that in any form of an economic cycle the type of momentum and force bringing about changes starts many months before. I agree that at this point in time the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke and his constituency may be finally gaining the results of the type of good investments made by the previous Liberal Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the time allotted for questions and comments has now terminated.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rossi: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) on a point of order.

Mr. Rossi: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Charest) said he was anxious to see if members would be here to vote tonight. I am glad he said that he had to leave on an urgent matter. He was alluding to the possibility that some members might not be here to vote according to what they said. That's what he meant. But, Mr. Speaker, this is rather important, because if there are members who are not here to vote, it is because they have to, like him, to be elsewhere.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I appreciate the Hon. Member's comments. On debate, the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald).

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Today, Mr. Speaker, we are considering the question of shoe imports and the decision of the Conservative Government to do away with quotas in that industry, which is tantamount to dropping that important industry itself.

First of all, it is a question of the credibility of the Government and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). When he was in Sherbrooke he promised he would maintain quotas in the footwear, textile and clothing industries. In so many words, the Prime Minister said he was not in favour of free trade in those sectors. Now he claims he did not make a firm commitment respecting footwear, but that is not true. He did make promises concerning shoes, textiles and clothing.

Earlier today his Minister said in the debate that the promise had been made before the elections were called. So he went on to suggest that those were not election promises. Mr. Speaker, I would counter that, as far as everybody is concerned, it is altogether unreasonable that a promise made before the election would indeed be broken by the Prime Minister himself. It is a promise and the voters, men and women alike, expect the Government to live up to it.

The problem in this industry is more acute in Montreal and in my Toronto riding of Broadview-Greenwood but it exists throughout Canada.

When a plant loses its customers and shuts down, there is no easy solution. It is a tragedy for all workers because most of them simply cannot find other jobs. For management it is not easy to transform a factory, particularly a shoe factory, into some other kind of manufacture.

When the Government announced its policy designed to end quotas it assured us that consumers would stand to benefit. Well, that is not clear because, under abstract conditions, one