

Supply

Quebec regulations, it became impossible to hire people who otherwise would have been unemployed. The provincial regulations required higher wages than those we had expected to pay. As you know, I am a Member from Ontario, Mr. Speaker, and indeed in my province there is a high level of co-operation between the federal and provincial Governments especially with respect to labour-intensive programs. I ask the Hon. Member, especially in the wake of Mr. Parizeau's statements of last week when he recognized the lack of co-operation between the federal and provincial Governments, if he does not expect the removal of those regulations which prevent the NEED program from being successful?

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's question is quite in order, especially since close to 400 Quebec municipalities already have submitted projects under the NEED program. They were kept waiting for three months, and finally the Province in a gesture smacking of false modesty decided to opt out and have its own program. And that program, unfortunately, comes under the responsibility of the Quebec Construction Board. This means that even if we can provide \$200 a week for people working on the projects, given the fact that a carpenter earns \$21 per hour according to the QBC, we cannot under the NEED program hire a carpenter for \$200 a week, which means in actual fact that many projects of significance to the community—there was reference earlier to infrastructures and recreational facilities—cannot go through unfortunately. This is unfortunate, because municipalities often are tremendous builders. They have needs, but lack the financial resources, and clearly they would like to make maximum use of those projects. I will give examples. In my home town, in Grandby township, parks and children's playgrounds should be developed. Unfortunately the Quebec Government has said: "As municipalities, you belong to us; you have no right to deal with the Federal Government".

And there is worse still. Last week the Minister for Municipal Affairs said: "If it so happened that indirectly, through your Recreation Committee, you were to get federal grants, we would deduct from any potential provincial grants the amounts received from the Federal Government. So I do not see much room for agreement, and I feel this is unfortunate. But on the other hand the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) has given us the assurance that the \$170 million in the budget earmarked for the Province of Quebec would be expended through the private sector, whom I urge to submit projects, as well as community organizations. Unfortunately for the municipalities, they will not benefit from the NEED program, and what with the terms of the provincial program PRIME, if they have a labour union and employees on the waiting list, they will get no help from the Quebec PRIME program. This is unfortunate because there are people who are unemployed, even though there may be unions and employees waiting to be recalled by their municipalities.

[*English*]

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, the last speaker waxed eloquently about the downside of the present Government in Quebec. I agree that there is a Government there committed to dividing and separating from the rest of the country, yet would he agree that when the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) come to power, the Separatists were not in power but came to power in Quebec some eight years later? Would he agree that some of the policies of the national Government made the problems in Quebec worse so that it was easier for the Party Quebecois to be elected after eight years of Liberal Government here?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. As Hon. Members know, questions should relate to the comments of the previous speaker as much as possible. It may have escaped the Speaker's attention that the Hon. Member referred to the matter raised by the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker). Nevertheless, I thought that I should remind the House that there must be a relationship to the remarks made.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, there is indeed a relationship between this question and my remarks, for we were dealing with federal-provincial relations. The Hon. Member has overlooked the fact that there is a difference between federal and provincial politics. The same Quebecers who elected the PQ government in 1976, provided our party with some 60 seats in 1979, and then with 74 seats out of 75 in 1980. Had they been in any way disenchanted with the policies put forward by the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), I doubt very much that they would have given us such an overwhelming endorsement. On the other hand, the Hon. Member would be well advised to wonder about his own party, a party which finally managed to gain only one seat after nine months in the government. I suggest that the support the Prime Minister is getting from Quebecers is due mostly to his performance as Prime Minister of Canada. On the contrary, provincial politics have a great many connotations and depend to a large extent on circumstances. It is due in part to the lack of understanding demonstrated by some of his colleagues who have projected such a poor image of English Canada—including the leadership candidate who is always speaking against bilingualism; as a matter of fact, I could understand the Quebec people's desire to seek independence and elect a separatist government, if his colleague I have referred to were the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

But for the time being, judging from recent polls . . . When Quebecers had the opportunity to vote during a referendum on Quebec's separation from the rest of Canada, they voted no.

Therefore, there is not any relationship, of cause and effect for the Prime Minister's support in Quebec has continually increased since 1968.