

*Oral Questions***LABOUR CONDITIONS**

## FINANCIAL COST OF UNEMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg-St. James):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The Canadian Council on Social Development has done an analysis of what it costs us in 1984 to keep one person, or each individual who is unemployed, unemployed, and it has come up with a figure of \$14,500 in lost unemployment insurance benefits, unemployment insurance contributions, CPP, hospital insurance, and income tax. At this cost it would be possible to employ people in the voluntary non-profit sector in full-time, long-term jobs. Is the Minister giving serious consideration to employing people in the non-profit sector in order to have people at work rather than paying them for being unemployed?

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Yes, exactly, Mr. Speaker, and I would remind the hon. gentleman that indeed I said so at the time of the Speech from the Throne debate. We have announced that we are contemplating a program to do exactly that. What we have in mind—and what I have already announced several weeks ago—is that we would work with the voluntary sector through the modality of Section 38 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, so that we would be able to use unemployment insurance funds, topped up with some considerable funding on the part of the federal Government, to work with voluntary agencies in creating jobs in a way as we do now with the private sector in the use of Section 38 funds. We have already announced our determination to do that.

Discussions are already taking place with the voluntary sector as to details on how the criteria can be developed, including the Council on Social Development. The general thrust the hon. gentleman has described is one which this Government is already pursuing.

**Mr. Keeper:** The proposal in the Speech from the Throne was to give a few dollars of pocket money to people who are on unemployment insurance in order for them to volunteer in the private sector.

## RECOMMENDATION MADE BY CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg-St. James):** Mr. Speaker, what the Canadian Council on Social Development is recommending is full-time, long-term jobs doing human service. Why has the Minister not given the courtesy of a reply to telephone calls from the Canadian Council on Social Development to meet with him to discuss this serious proposal to create 50,000 full-time, long-term jobs in the voluntary sector?

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, briefly, the hon. gentleman has completely mischaracterized our proposal. I suggest he go back and read the documents again. In terms of consultations with the voluntary sector, I have already met with representatives of the

voluntary sector. My colleague, the Minister of Finance, has met with representatives of the Canadian Council on Social Development. My officials have met with officials of the Canadian Council on Social Development, and we are arranging a meeting for me once the preparatory work has been done.

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**PUBLIC WORKS**

## DISPOSAL OF RIVERS AIR BASE IN MANITOBA—FUTURE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Public Works. It relates to the Rivers air base in Manitoba which the Government decided to dispose of back in September. The tendering process is now complete and I gather a decision is pending.

Within the guidelines that the Government set out to dispose of the base as a single entity, is there any provision for the community facilities which are there so that they remain and can be used by the community? I am talking about the very excellent runway, some of the buildings on the base, and particularly the golf course.

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, yes, in fact the authority has been given to accept the highest bidder. I have no exact memory as to the details. I know one of the questions I asked was whether or not we could separate some community facilities, and I was told that in fact they were included in the bid invitation. I hope that the community can in fact arrive at some arrangement with the successful bidder to try to solve the problem.

## REQUEST THAT MINISTER CLARIFY SITUATION

**Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. There is immediate concern in the Rivers area concerning the upcoming decision. There are people who are employed on the base and there are rumours that they will be laid off imminently. There is a lot of confusion there as a result of dates. We hear that the base will be turned over to the successful bidder at the end of June. We also hear that there will be terminations of people working on the base, in a very few weeks' time. If the Minister could do anything to clear up the situation so that the people in that area would know precisely what is happening, and when it will happen, it would allay a lot of the personal fears which are arising out of some of the rumours that are going around.

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member's request is a perfectly reasonable one, and I will try to give immediate attention to this issue.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for St. John's West.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Where have you been, John?