

Presence in Gallery

Mr. Crosbie: Just wait until the electors get their hands on you. They are never going to forget. Let us go to the people tomorrow and see what they think. They are going to batter you, you gutless wonders.

● (1450)

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND RIDINGS

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Under the so-called Special Employment Initiatives Program the two Liberal held ridings in Prince Edward Island received a whopping \$2,400,000. By contrast, the two Progressive Conservative held ridings in Prince Edward Island received a paltry \$215,000. That is a discrepancy of 11 to one in favour of the Liberal ridings. Does the Minister think that the taxpayers of Canada are gullible enough to believe that such a huge discrepancy can be justified by the comparative jobless figures across the Province in those four ridings? Or will he, instead, admit that the program in question is blatant political corruption on a national scale?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: What about the Veterans Affairs headquarters?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised at the Hon. Member's question because, as the figures clearly show, on every one of the programs of direct job-creation, Prince Edward Island has received far more than the percentage which would be equivalent to the percentage of unemployed. If the hon. gentleman is concerned about us somehow not favouring his riding in Prince Edward Island, I would remind him that the federal Government is spending virtually \$20 million—\$19.5 million—for the establishment of the veterinary college in his own constituency.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Accidents will happen.

Mr. Roberts: Clearly we are out to salvage the Hon. Member.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF HONORARY CONSULS OF ESTONIA, LATVIA, AND LITHUANIA

Mr. Speaker: I would like to call the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of the Honorary Consuls of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

EMPLOYMENT

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES ON JOB CREATION AND PETROLEUM INCENTIVES PROGRAM GRANTS

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I want to return to the issue of rewarding friends and punishing the unemployed. According to the Estimates tabled just yesterday, the Government will give an increased amount, up to \$1,600,000,000 in PIP grants, to its oil company friends, while the unemployed across Canada suffer cuts of some \$300 million in total federal grants and contributions for job-creation programs. With respect to the Government's policy of rewarding its friends, which is so evident in its political allocations between Provinces through the Special Employment Initiatives Program—not all the others—does this cut mean that that discrimination also applies across the board as between oil companies on the one hand and unemployed Canadians on the other?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member's question is a bit convoluted. Since when are the oil companies such great friends of this government? He should try visiting Calgary when he gets away from the British Columbia coast some time.

I believe there is some substantial essence in the Hon. Member's question. I believe it was about the Estimates. I would just like to remind the hon. gentleman that what we have seen now are the Main Estimates, which are added to as the year goes on by Supplementary Estimates. Therefore it would be inappropriate for him to draw conclusions on the basis of the comparison I believe he was making, if I understood his figures correctly.

Mr. Epp: Oh, come on, John.

Mr. Kristiansen: As to friends and enemies, I wish I had the sort of political enemies which gave me the thousands of dollars a year that his so-called enemies in the oil companies give him. Let us get it straight.

FORESTRY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS—SIZE OF FUNDING

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): According to those same Estimates, Mr. Speaker, there has been a 40 per cent increase in PIP grants to oil companies for drilling dry holes, while forestry spending is down by 61 per cent to only \$45 million.

An Hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Kristiansen: Forestry employment programs which the Minister talked about earlier today, are down from \$21.5 million to only \$60,000. That is a cut of 99.998 per cent. There will have to be a lot of supplementary estimates to make up that difference. Have the Minister and his Government given up on the forest industry? Have he and his Government given up on the unemployed of Canada? If not, when will they do an