

Employment

was not the government's fault, that we had to understand the situation and that nothing could be done. Mr. Speaker, I feel that these people on the opposite side should be put to the test and asked if they are willing to eat crow and try to find an answer to the questions and needs of Canadians today. It is incredible, Mr. Speaker. So many people are anxious about the future, so many people are suffering, thousands of unemployed workers can no longer support themselves, thousands of workers are expecting to be laid off within the next few weeks or months, while this government has failed to come up with anything more positive and more effective than these medium and long-term programs and projections that should be questioned from the outset, considering the fact that for 15 years, the projections presented by the ministers of finance have never been realized.

Yesterday, on television, the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) tried to reassure Canadians. It is too late for your programs to do any good. This government has shown a serious lack of foresight and does not deserve the trust of the Canadian people. Obviously, I do not expect him to resign. They don't even have the guts to resign when they have betrayed the trust of the Canadian people. However, and it cannot be said too often, Canadians will pass judgement on this government. They will indeed, but meanwhile, we as members of the opposition have a duty to challenge this government, to get these members and ministers to bring in satisfactory measures. The Minister of Employment and Immigration had better not come back with his excuse that they do not have any proposals or short-term emergency plans. We need an emergency plan today so that tomorrow our factories stop shutting down at the same rate they have been for the last few years, especially in 1982. I am sure the minister knows perfectly well what I mean. Will he be able to convince the Minister of Finance and his cabinet colleagues that what this country needs today is action? This government has demonstrated that it lacks every kind of initiative, and I feel very sorry for the Canadian people.

Mr. Dennis Dawson (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at this opportunity to speak today after the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle). Incidentally, a little over two years ago I also happened to speak after the hon. member in a debate in the House initiated by the opposition—we were the opposition at the time—concerning the job-creation programs of the Progressive Conservative government of which my hon. colleague was a member when he was sitting on this side of the House. That same government abolished direct job-creation programs, as the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) pointed out earlier. It had succeeded in doing away with tax credit programs for job creation and in nine months managed to create an economic situation that led Quebecers and Canadians to put them back where they belonged, in the opposition.

When listening to the hon. member for Joliette, we hear the same rhetoric and the same turn of phrase often used by Parti Québécois ministers and also heard this week at the federal-provincial conference, where the Premier of Quebec spoke

more or less in the same terms. They probably share the services of the same speech writers on economic subjects, and they also share the notion that an emergency plan is supposed to solve all our problems. What they are saying, in substance, is that we have to spend money to try to find some kind of solution. The Canadian government is expected to give the government of Quebec hundreds of millions of dollars so it can make propaganda and conduct advertising campaigns, and subsidize the salaries it pays its employees. I am sorry to have to tell the hon. member for Joliette that the Canadian government has no intention of doing so.

I should like to set the record straight as far as job-creation programs are concerned and tell the House what the Canadian government has done recently in this area. Mr. Speaker, without going into a lengthy introduction, I should like to give some facts and figures to demonstrate the role played by the federal government in job creation, especially in Quebec. In two years, in 1981-82, the federal government's direct job-creation policy created 150,600 jobs in Canada, of which 44,850 were created in the province of Quebec. Mr. Speaker, these actions speak louder than words. Not like the Parti Québécois, which last week cancelled the OSE program. They said that everything was all right, that there were no problems involved in abolishing the OSE program. It only meant that directors of information would go back to their departments. In other words, the OSE was a propaganda and information program which, for all practical purposes, was not doing anything. That is not the kind of action we are taking. We are creating programs that produce results and I shall give a few more examples.

The hon. member for Joliette knows full well that even in his riding, hundreds of thousands of dollars are poured each year into direct employment programs; those programs are meant, with his co-operation, to create jobs and help the people of his riding. The same goes for the whole province of Quebec, Mr. Speaker. Now, speaking of the employment tax credit program launched a few years ago, had it not been cancelled by the Progressive Conservative government, 43,400 jobs would have been created during the current fiscal year, of which again 15,770 in the province of Quebec alone; that is, the fair share Quebec is entitled to in terms of a federal presence and activity.

I feel that we of the Quebec caucus on this side of the House have no reason to be ashamed of the presence and activities of the federal government in Quebec. On the other hand, of the 6,000 Canadians who will benefit from the federal job program intended for the underprivileged, 2,500 will be created in the province of Quebec, Mr. Speaker. There is also the Local Employment Assistance Program—LEAP—through which 954 Quebecers will find fulfilling employment. I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. It may be exasperating somewhat for opposition members to be given this information and the statistics may be boring, but still, it is important for members of the government to quote the true figures and inform the people.