

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I was rather surprised to hear the argument raised by my New Brunswick colleague. He speaks about extending the program. He mentions the need for this program. However, he is forgetting something important in my opinion, namely the fact that this program was basically temporary, because when it was developed, its purpose was to help those people who cannot afford to convert their heating system or to insulate their homes.

On the other hand, a responsible Government like the one which has just been elected must consider the fact that we have a deficit of \$38 billion, and that certain programs have already helped hundreds of thousands of people, as you said yourself in your speech. You quoted a figure of 21,000 people a month, which means 21,000 homes every month, and you said that the announcement that this program would disappear a few months before it happened has allowed some 42,000 people to present an application. It would seem that all those who really wanted to apply under this program have done so and that our responsible Government must now deal with other issues. In this optic, my dear colleague, I wonder whether the priority should not be to create jobs, as our Government is doing through the reforms it is promoting in the small business sector, for instance, so that people will be able to afford to insulate their homes or to change their heating system, instead of the Government maintaining this program which, for all practical purposes, has already met its objective.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Westmorland-Kent (Mr. Robichaud).

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised at the comments made by my hon. colleague, who is more interested in the cutbacks made by the Government than in the help these programs have provided.

When he asks whether it would not be better to consider other programs for job creation, I must say yes, but I would like to ask the Hon. Member: Where are the programs and where are the jobs? Today, there is a need in this country for the programs we are considering, and it is a real need and there are jobs to be had. Why not let people do this work and have the jobs we need so badly? These are real jobs, not paper ones.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the Hon. Member for Richelieu (Mr. Plamondon) have a supplementary?

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague has been away from the House too long, when I hear him referring to new programs. In fact, I think he just got back from Cameroon. I must admit I was on the same trip, but when he refers to a program to help small businesses, I believe the Minister of State (Small Businesses) (Mr. Bissonnette) has talked about employment programs, and the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) has talked about jobs, permanent jobs. When the Hon. Member refers to job creation programs, and he says this was a job creation program, these are not the kind of jobs Canadians want, and they made this very clear on September 4, since we cam-

paigned on the issue of creating permanent jobs and not the kind of temporary employment provided in these assistance programs. I think the focus of the program was good. However, now that the program has done what it set out to do, we must concentrate on creating permanent jobs and use the funds to get rid of the deficit we were left by the former Government and promote the creation of permanent jobs.

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, once again, I agree with my hon. friend that we all want permanent jobs. But since in our part of the world there are no permanent jobs, people will take on any kind of work, whether it is temporary or seasonal—they want work! If I could be sure that we would get the jobs, the tens of thousands of jobs we were promised during the election campaign, I would say: Congratulations. However, I and the people of my riding are still waiting for these permanent jobs.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment. I have something to add in response to what was said by the Hon. Member for Richelieu (Mr. Plamondon).

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I would remind the Hon. Member that he must address his questions and comments to the speech by the Hon. Member for Westmorland-Kent (Mr. Robichaud).

[Translation]

Mr. Waddell: Ah yes, that is a problem. I would like to ask the Hon. Member who spoke, perhaps in English—

[English]

I just heard the Conservative Member say that the program has done its job.

[Translation]

The program is finished.

[English]

The need has been met. Yet the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) said in Vancouver just the other day, in a speech on March 8, that an existing residential housing energy cost could be reduced by up to 30 per cent through conservation investment. How would he explain those words of the Minister in response to what the Member has said? Does he have any indication in his riding of how poor people really need the Government program to continue the conservation measures?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Member for Westmorland-Kent (Mr. Robichaud) to answer the question this afternoon.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.