

deliver programs more effectively and more efficiently to Canadians.

When the hon. member asserts there is great conflict and problems, he is not describing what in fact takes place. We postponed the meeting for a period of a couple of weeks to allow the provinces to have more time. I have indicated that we will have a meeting of deputy ministers within a couple of weeks to go over this documentation and based upon that we will then set a new timetable for ministerial meetings.

• (1445)

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup):** Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that the federal-provincial conference, already cancelled once, has been postponed once again, this time indefinitely, because of the continuing deadlock with British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member lives in a world of fiction and fantasy. He simply makes up things and then tries to launch them as facts.

That is simply not true. I told him before he read the second question he had prepared that I have talked to all provincial ministers in each province who have indicated their continued willingness to co-operate to get social reform in this country, to put people back to work, to provide a better sense of security and to give some hope back to Canadians.

\* \* \*

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina):** My question is for the Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

As the government moves forward with the renewal of Canada's environmental, communications and transportation infrastructure, many of my constituents in Trinity—Spadina are looking forward to the new jobs that will be created by the program for today's and tomorrow's economy.

Can the minister tell us how many jobs Canadians can expect to have generated by this program and its spinoffs and when will these badly needed projects commence?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question which gives me the

opportunity to give more good news to this House on how this Liberal government is getting Canadians back to work.

Since I reported last Friday, we have an increase of \$8 million of projects that have been approved, another 400 people, and we are now up to 5,500 jobs. We have approved over 350 applications and we have another thousand in the pipeline. What is more, there are people in rural Saskatchewan at this very moment constructing and reconstructing roads for the benefit of the citizens in those communities.

Finally, the original estimate of 60,000 jobs has now been revised as a result of accurate data from Statistics Canada.

\* \* \*

#### TOBACCO

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

When the federal government lowered the cost of cigarettes in an attempt to cut off smuggling, it spawned new problems including increased smuggling of alcohol and interprovincial smuggling of cheap cigarettes.

I ask the Prime Minister if the government has any realistic plans to put out the fires that his cigarette policies have lit.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the program that we put in place to stop the smuggling of cigarettes has been a great success. There were reports that there was an increase in smoking but the articles did not report the fact that cigarette export sales declined while domestic shipments increased.

In terms of consumption, when you look at the total number of cigarette shipments a year ago compared to the total number of cigarettes shipments this year, there was a decrease of 3 per cent.

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot):** A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister.

Earlier this month the premier of Alberta in his role as chairman of the most recent western premiers' conference wrote to the Prime Minister asking for his co-operation to combat the potential flood of smuggled tobacco from central Canada into western Canada. One of the recommendations was to implement a uniform federal tobacco tax rate across all of Canada to lessen the incentive for interprovincial smuggling.

Can the Prime Minister tell the House if he has made any effort to adopt this proposal from the western premiers?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we made exactly the same offer to all the provinces. Some decided to take it, others decided not to take it. We have offered exactly the same to all the provinces. We did not treat any province differently.