

Adjournment Debate

can have some protection under the job-creation programs and can find jobs which they are prepared and willing to take. They are asking for some expansion of public sector employment opportunities through meaningful work projects within the community which will give well-paid, meaningful, long-term employment opportunities.

They are asking for the industry to participate in funding some projects that they are responsible for, particularly in the forest industry. Why should Government come along with job-creation programs to support the corporate sector, which is quite willing to lay off more and more people each year with the excuse in its rationalization that it is making us competitive? Basically what it is doing is making them competitive and throwing Canadians out of work.

I have a petition from the Organization of Unemployed Workers which I will table in the House tomorrow when petitions are called. Because of the frustration that this organization is feeling, representing as it does the work force in Port Alberni, it is calling for unemployment insurance benefits to be extended, not because these people are particularly interested in staying on unemployment, but they have seen the failure of job-creation and the failure of the federal Government to deal with unemployment in a meaningful way. They want unemployment insurance benefits to be increased to 90 per cent of their insurable level so that they can maintain their homes and families. The job-creation program is becoming more and more of an obvious failure. The budget we are expecting to be brought down and the \$19 billion we are being asked to approve had better deal with the problems of the workers in this country.

● (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

THE ADMINISTRATION—ROLE OF ALASTAIR GILLESPIE. (B) USE OF FUNDS ALLOCATED TO NOVA SCOTIA

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue on the theme of the questions which I asked the Minister of Energy (Mr. Chrétien) last Thursday, and to elaborate a little concerning the overt attempts, in my view, by officials to circumvent the Parliamentary guidelines of good behaviour in order to provide an artificial legitimacy for the payments to be made to Alastair Gillespie and Associates in this project.

The Minister, upon reflection, Mr. Speaker, should realize that these efforts only serve to implicate the Government more deeply in the special treatment, access and favouritism, or whatever you want to call it, towards a former Cabinet colleague in relation to this Nova Scotia energy project. Indeed,

the oil substitution agreement itself, as part of the National Energy Program, was stretched in order to accommodate that kind of project which Alastair Gillespie espoused. When efforts were made to alter the submission to Treasury Board, the guidelines were not being followed, they were being circumvented in advance. Anyone looking at this situation, without extreme prejudice, can see this very clearly.

The people of Cape Breton and of Nova Scotia are sick and tired, Mr. Speaker, of being the victims of rhetoric and job proposals by a series of Liberal Cabinet Ministers and the former defeated Premier. A quick review of Liberal promises to Cape Breton reveals that the defeated Premier of Nova Scotia, now Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Regan) and the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) traded for years on the promises that they were going to build a new steel mill at Gabarouse, or to use the argot of the industry, a Greenfields project. After milking this for all the political capital it was worth, they forgot about it.

They also raised people's hopes in Cape Breton with another energy-related project, the celebrated Shaheen oil refinery. Land was expropriated at enormous cost but nothing happened here, either.

The most recent piece of "puffery" from the Deputy Prime Minister was his announcement that a large steel fabricating facility was being considered for the port Hawkesbury area, which would supply 1,000 jobs. When questioned by reporters for more details, and after it was pointed out to him that such a plant was already available in nearby Pictou County in my constituency, where over 1,000 people also needed work in an existing plant, the Deputy Prime Minister, said in his usual obfuscatory manner, "Well, it is only a concept". Some concept, Mr. Speaker. Some track record.

The persistent raising of the hopes and aspirations of the people of Cape Breton by the Liberals, while shirking their responsibility to produce something practical, is costing them their political credibility there. I am sure that recent private polls have driven that home to them very, very forcibly.

Recent international pricing developments, as well, regarding petroleum products, are now showing the people of Nova Scotia and, indeed, of Canada, how bankrupt and ill advised the federal Government's National Energy Program really is. The revelations about the liquefaction of coal and the details of this project are just other examples of the latest Liberal blunder. The Province of Nova Scotia, naturally, was anxious to participate in this pilot project, but, as usual, the primary funding, the concept, the impetus, and much of the gain, was designed by the Liberals to benefit themselves. Surely, the Cabinet documents indicate that knowledgeable officials in the Department of Energy knew from the start that this project had little chance of bringing any practical benefits to the people of Cape Breton.

The former defeated Premier of Nova Scotia, incidentally, living up to his nickname of "Gabby", intervened the other day in the House and asked a question designed to provoke me. He asked the question of his colleague, the Hon. Member for