

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, perhaps the Minister needs a sabbatical in Paris to learn a little bit about the private sector, along with Ed Clark.

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### NEW EMPLOYMENT EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

#### CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the Minister probably does not know that most of the jobs in this country are created by small business. Small business in this country is operating very close to the margins right now—those operations that are still functioning—and there is going to be a massive loss of jobs as a result of this increase in unemployment insurance premiums. The Minister owes the House the honesty to give us the projections he must have of how many new Canadians he is going to put out of work.

Let me ask the Minister a question about his so-called job creation program on which he indicated yesterday he was going to invite the provinces, and I quote, “—wherever possible to supplement the federal contribution.” Would the Minister tell us which provinces specifically he consulted about this Program before announcing it to the House of Commons, or will he tell us that there was no consultation in detail with any province? If there was consultation, with which provinces?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, first of all I regret again that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition prefers to make funny jokes on this very important issue. I will remind him that I would rather trust the judgment of the spokesmen for the small business organizations who endorsed, very strongly, the statement I made yesterday, than his own judgment in this particular issue.

As for the specific question he raised on the issue of consultation, I understand that the Minister of Employment and Immigration had discussions with the Ontario Government on a preliminary basis. He has also been in touch with the Quebec Government and was going to arrange a meeting which he held yesterday. What we have provided has been funds and a very broad framework for a program. The details of that program are going to be finally worked out as the Minister of Employment and Immigration concludes his discussions. I understand Quebec officials are coming to meet with officials of the Minister this week and that the Minister is going to Ontario again this afternoon and that he will be out West and in the Maritimes in the course of next week. He will have terminated the consultations during the course of next week after which he will be able to announce the details of the Program we have talked about.

I said that as a Government we are ready to take and provide leadership to this country, but we are also ready to consult, and that is what we are doing.

• (1425)

#### REQUEST FOR PROGRAM DETAILS

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, just so that I am clear on this, the Minister of Finance has now indicated that, in so far as advanced consultation is concerned, the Liberal Government believes that this is a country of two Provinces, Ontario and Quebec, and that the other eight Provinces and two Territories are called in after the fact.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark:** Let me put the following questions to the Minister of Finance who introduced this Program. Are the details of the Program now established? Is the proposition being put to the Provinces that they can take it or leave it as Ottawa dictates, or is there more flexibility? Can we have the details of that proposal spelled out in the House of Commons now, details which were announced in general terms by the Minister of Finance yesterday?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, perhaps I can take the opportunity to respond to the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition who seems to be preoccupied with the question of consultation. I do not know what he did with his summer vacation, but all summer I talked to the Provinces, business and labour, concerning job creation. I did not see him at any of those meetings or discussions.

The fact of the matter is that the Provinces are approaching this in the spirit of co-operation, unlike the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition who is just here apparently to make political points. The fact is that we are developing a program in consultation with them because we recognize that there are people in the country who are suffering severe hardship as a result of unemployment. We want to devote our efforts and our resources as much as possible, in combination with the Provinces, the municipalities and the private sector, to mount a maximum effort on their behalf. Frankly, we invite Members of the Opposition to put their best efforts forward in this regard rather than simply their criticisms.

#### ROLE OF PROVINCES

**Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I ask him to give us a little more detail on the programs announced yesterday by the Minister of Finance. Since the Government last year reduced its transfer payments to the Provinces, forcing them to close hospital beds, fire teachers, and lay off workers, where does the Minister expect the Provinces to get the money to participate? Equally important, will the Provinces be required to contribute matching funds before the federal Government participates?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, there was very much a false