

Oral Questions

Would the minister indicate, in estimating that deficit, what were the unemployment levels he anticipated?

● (1452)

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, we have used the figures that we have until the end of the year. I said at that time that the level of unemployment is too high. It is 8.3 per cent. This is giving us a basis to estimate the level of the cash requirement or the budgetary deficit at the end of the year.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED INVITATION TO LEADERS OF SEPARATIST PARTIES IN CORSICA AND BRITTANY TO COME TO CANADA

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Acting Prime Minister is supplementary to the question asked by the hon. member for Hull. The unwarranted and provocative interference by the government of France in Canadian affairs continues. Will the Canadian government give consideration to inviting to Ottawa the leaders of the separatist parties in Corsica and Brittany to encourage them to destroy the integral sovereignty of France?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): I have no answer, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. Member: I should hope not.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

PROPOSED GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME PROGRAM—COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDS

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. A few days ago the minister told the House that it is her hope and her aspiration to bring in the guaranteed annual income for Canadians and that indeed she hopes to place legislation to that effect before the House soon. Can the minister tell the House whether she can estimate the cost of such a program on an annual basis and secondly, in view of the deficit the government faces and in view of its espoused policy of restraint, can she state where the funds for such a program would come from?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago when I assured the house of my interest and commitment to the progressive implementation of a guaranteed annual income program for Canadians, I intended doing it within the national budget and without any tax increase. I am pleased the hon. member asked me this question because it enables me to say precisely that I intend to develop this program for the benefit of the most needy groups. I am thinking, in particular, about three groups,

[Mr. Stevens.]

and not about the whole of Canada. Of course, any improvement in federal government social security programs means tax rearrangements of some kind.

[English]

Mr. Yewchuk: Mr. Speaker, as usual the minister did not answer the question.

Miss Bégin: Yes I did.

POSSIBLE STUDY ON EFFECT OF GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME ON MOTIVATION TO WORK

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I am sure if the minister reviews the question she will find that she has not answered, so I would like to ask another. Has the minister conducted any study to determine what effect a guaranteed annual income might have on the motivation to work? If she has done such a study, can she report the results and if she has not, has she at least consulted her colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce to determine what his position on that subject would be?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will try to use my best English to answer in order that my colleague can try to understand me. I repeat, I am aiming at target groups, namely, three groups in Canada right now. My officials are working on these programs. I will just sum up my previous remarks by saying that I intend to do it within the present federal budget which means that I do not intend to ask for or recommend raising taxes. I intend to recommend instead a rearrangement of the existing tax structure and spending in my department.

This being said, the hon. member, who I believe is my official critic on the other side, should know that we are studying and have published reports on exactly his second question which, by the way, was not at all the same as the first one. There are three or four reports at least, including a profile of the low wage earner in Canada, which are available to the public. I will have great pleasure sending another set of these reports to the hon. member.

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ENERGY

OIL—SUGGESTED SHORTAGE BY MID-1980'S—REQUEST FOR INCREASED COAL PRODUCTION IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Andy Hogan (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The minister said recently in Paris and before that in Toronto, that by the middle 1980's or shortly thereafter Canada will have to import more and more oil, that the situation is like the tip of an iceberg in relation to the *Titanic*. Does the minister still feel that way in view of the recent findings and the talk there is about conventional oil being found in Alberta and other parts of Canada, as well as other parts of the world?