

Oral Questions

the total obligation of the government—and I presume the hon. member would agree with that—to provide jobs. We look to the private sector to make a very important contribution.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Create the climate.

An hon. Member: Get off their backs.

Mr. MacEachen: Furthermore, I should draw to the hon. member's attention the fact that the quotations to which he referred as allegedly having been made by the minister did not refer to the unemployed of Canada. They were general comments relating to what the minister conceives to have been the lifestyle of Canadians, and that is not and has never been a question of government policy.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You won't get away with that.

REQUEST FOR ACTION ON PROJECT TO CUT TIMBER ON LOWER
CHURCHILL TO RELIEVE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): The minister is reflecting the views of the Prime Minister who said in 1972 that we can be obsessed with unemployment. There are 117,000 people in the Atlantic provinces who are obsessed with that.

● (1422)

There are certain things the government can do. There are two Newfoundland projects upon which the minister can act. What has happened to the project suggested in June of 1977? It was suggested that a project be commenced to cut timber at the Lower Churchill water reservoir to create 400 jobs for loggers who are now unemployed as a result of the shutdown of the Labrador Linerboard Mill. That project would bring about a permanent benefit. It has been six months now, and there are 400 who could be employed on that project. Will the Deputy Prime Minister move on that and show some concern?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will take note of the hon. member's representations and ensure that whatever proposals have been made will be considered at the earliest possible date.

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INDUSTRY

FLUORSPAR MINE AT ST. LAWRENCE, NEWFOUNDLAND—
PROPOSED PRESSURE ON ALCAN TO OPERATE

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The consultants B. L. Hodge and Partners of London, England just made a report to the Newfoundland government and this government in connection with the fluors-

[Mr. MacEachen.]

par mine at St. Lawrence. They report that it is feasible to operate it, and that it could be profitable if Alcan would operate it properly and make the necessary investments. Alcan has refused to do this, as the minister knows as a result of a meeting with the Newfoundland government. Will the government take steps to put pressure on Alcan, and will the government tell Alcan that there will be no tax concessions, tax relief or assistance to Alcan in any way, shape or form if Alcan does not operate the only remaining fluorspar mine in Canada, which experts report can be operated profitably?

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I have had discussions with the management of Alcan. They informed me that the fluorspar from the mine at St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, was used mainly as a chemical in spray cans, and because of the drastic reduction in the use of spray cans in Canada it is no longer feasible to operate that mine, bearing in mind the conditions under which it is operating.

They also informed me that without any assistance from the federal government they are investing something like \$400 million in the aluminum industry in the province of Quebec, so they are not really withdrawing from the Canadian scene at all. They are fully prepared to participate in the aluminum industry, but they have lost \$10 million in recent years operating that mine in Newfoundland, and they feel they can not conceivably carry on. However, they will gradually create a number of jobs easily through their expansion in the province of Quebec.

Mr. Crosbie: What is the good of this report then?

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT—REASON FOR DELAY OF MINISTER'S
MEETING TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Can the minister confirm the cynical attitude taken by the Minister of Employment and Immigration at the weekend when he said that Canadians are spoiled rotten and that they need a kick in the gut, which really amounts to blaming the victims of unemployment for their own plight? Can the minister tell the House whether this attitude, which amounts to saying that the government should not be doing anything, accounts for the fact that the government does not plan to do anything to deal with unemployment until a meeting of the first ministers which may or may not take place in February or March?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we are waiting until the meeting of the premiers and the Prime Minister on the economy. We have before the House at this time a bill containing many incentives. Many people are waiting for this bill to be passed so that they can make investment decisions. In the bill there is a tax cut which will stimulate consumer demand and which will take effect in