

Oral Questions

Mr. Mulroney: There is no belt below which the Minister will not kick. He has again misled and distorted the truth. He has done it many times.

REQUEST THAT POLICIES BE AMENDED

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I tell the Minister that there are 1.5 million Canadians crying out for an opportunity to work. Will he correct the miserable policies which have devastated the country and the economy? He has an opportunity to do it. Will he bring them in in his next Budget? Will he do it now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition says that I distorted the truth. If that is his argument, will he let me release the letter he sent to my officials at that time on this particular subject?

Mr. Mulroney: Release it any time.

Mr. Nielsen: Table it.

LEVEL OF PRODUCTIVITY

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Toronto the Minister waxed eloquently about improved productivity. It looks like a productivity increase of about 2 per cent or so this year. Is the Minister satisfied with that kind of productivity increase? How will he explain the suggestion of the Conference Board that productivity will again decline to a 1.3 per cent increase this year, and perhaps down to 0.0 next year, 1985? How will we ever get the country growing again if we do not get some productivity increases more appropriate to the people and the resources of the country? What is the Minister's program?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member wants me to explain the forecasts of the Conference Board. I suggest he ask the Conference Board how it arrives at those particular conclusions. I would be very happy to explain to him the basis of our forecast when I come out with the Budget. At that time he will have all the information, and I will be able to explain exactly what is our forecast.

If the Conservatives want to believe in doom and gloom, that is their business, that is their policy, and that is their approach to life. They are welcome to it. Let him check on other forecasts by other agencies. Let him check the forecasts for Canada of the Conference Board of the United States. Let him check the OECD forecasts for Canada in 1984. They are not along the lines the Hon. Member likes to choose. They are certainly not along the lines of the doom and gloom of the Tory Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, the Government has offered Canadians a bleak, dim, grey future. The Government has offered to do nothing except to make Pollyanna suggestions and rose-coloured speeches to the Canadian Club. When will the Minister come up with a program which puts people back to work again? When will he do something about the fact that 250,000 more Canadians are unemployed today than there were when the recession the Government started, commenced?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend must have been very absent minded in the last year because Canada has created over 400,000 jobs since the trough of the recession. Canada has created more jobs proportionately than any other industrial country. We on this side of the House intend to proceed with that record in 1984, while my hon. friend will stay at the Wailing Wall and refuse to face reality.

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CROWN CORPORATIONS

ACCESS POLICY

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Is it, or has it ever been the policy of the Government to give or restrict access to the operations and facilities of Crown corporations, based on political affiliation?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

ELDORADO RESOURCES LIMITED—ACCESS TO MINE DENIED TO NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY MEMBERS

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Why is it that Eldorado Resources Limited, the operator of the Rabbit Lake uranium mine in northern Saskatchewan, a federal Crown corporation which owns 100 per cent of the mine, denied our request to visit its operations this Thursday solely because we are members of the New Democratic Party?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, they have a pretty good reason, because the Hon. Member does not even know who is the Minister responsible. It is not I; it is the Minister of National Revenue.

Mr. Anguish: That is not correct. It is the Minister of Energy.