

S.O. 21

LABOUR CONDITIONS

DECLINE IN UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, unemployment is falling in Canada faster than almost anywhere else in the industrialized world. Our rate of decline in unemployment is faster than in Australia, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Only Belgium has been cutting its rate of unemployment faster than Canada. Britain, Italy, and Spain have actually had an increase in unemployment.

We still have a long way to go insofar as this blessing is distributed unevenly across the country. However, there are regions where unemployment is between 6 per cent and 7 per cent. The Government is coping effectively with the problem of unemployment, the greatest challenge it faced when it took office. We are doing it in the most effective way—the private enterprise way—by building a climate of confidence in which people can invest and make job opportunities.

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MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

ALLEGED RACIAL SLUR

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. Last Saturday we saw the actions of the federal Government with respect to the conference on multiculturalism. However, we see that its actions in another matter show that it is really not concerned about the Canadian people as per the following letter which states:

Dear Prime Minister Mulroney:

We wish to add our voices to a matter of great concern to all Canadians of Italian heritage. The recent incident of a slanderous and bigoted remark directed by the Member for Nunatsiak at the Member for Bourassa in the House of Commons has not been resolved to our satisfaction. The name-calling—only continues to perpetuate a mythical association of a large group of Canadian citizens with criminal activities. As lawyers and as Canadians we cannot tolerate such prejudicial assertions from our legislators.

The damage—has been done, not just to Mr. Rossi's reputation, but to the Canadian-Italian community—a full apology by Mr. Suluk specifically for the remarks—and your public condemnation of his remarks would be an acceptable means of communicating to all Canadians that statements tending to slander a community will not be tolerated in Canada. Further, a strong statement from your office, may dissuade public—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Sixty seconds.

● (1410)

EXTERNAL AID

GUATEMALA—CONTINUATION OF CANADIAN AID URGED

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, Guatemala's people have lived under a brutal dictatorship since the United States invasion of 1954. Four out of five Guatemalan children under age 5 suffer from malnutrition because the farmers, mostly Indian, have been driven out of the fertile plains by armed landlords' gangs.

The U.S. armed terror that kept the people from peaceful change or guerrilla war has cost over 100,000 dead and 38,000 have disappeared. GAM, a group of relatives of the disappeared, bravely demands searches for relatives. The newly elected Government of President Cerezo is trying to restore a just and workable economy and to defend human rights, but it does not yet control the army and political violence has not yet ceased.

Canada won high praise for helping 769 refugees to escape from Guatemala in 1985, and for aiding church-based groups helping the families of murdered farmers to re-establish their livelihoods. I commend the Canadian Government for its help to Guatemala and urge that this help be extended.

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CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

RESTORATION OF PENSIONERS' RAIL PASSES

Mr. Bill Gottselig (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, the issue of pass cancellations for former employees of CP Rail has come to a very successful conclusion. The President of CP Rail has advised all former employees, in a letter dated April 9, 1986, that they will now have the choice of having their CP Rail passes reinstated or continuing on with the health plan which was substituted for the pass. The important thing is that the people directly affected now have a choice and can make this decision.

The old adage that each journey begins with a single step certainly holds true in this instance. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of my colleagues, the Hon. Member for Cochrane—Superior (Mr. Penner), the Hon. Member for Nipissing (Mr. Mantha), and particularly the Hon. Member for Timmins—Chapleau (Mr. Gervais) who arranged the meeting with the President of CP Rail. I would also like to commend the President of CP Rail for the role he played in this policy change.