

Oral Questions

I ask the Minister of Finance to recall that in 1980 when he took over as Minister of Energy, Alberta had the lowest unemployment rate in the country and one of the lowest in the world. With his policies, in four years he has created record high unemployment rates. He brags about employment creation programs and the money that goes into direct job creation. Can the Minister of Finance tell us why direct job creation money is being allocated to ridings today on the basis of unemployment rates from 1980 and 1981 rather than those of 1984?

● (1450)

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Hon. Member that, since the beginning of this year, 74,000 new jobs have been created in this country. Last month alone, 23,000 new jobs were created. My friend could reflect upon those figures which indicate that there is indeed a significant amount of job creation taking place.

Dealing with the situation of his own province, I would like to remind my hon. friend that, as recently as last week, we announced a significant participation in an upgrader project in Saskatchewan which will have the joint participation of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Both provinces will be benefiting significantly from this particular development.

As far as the energy situation in general is concerned, I must remind my friend of the situation around the world, and particularly of that in the United States. Perhaps he would like to check the figures for Oklahoma, Texas, and a number of other states, to see what has happened over there in the last two years regarding the decline in activities in the energy field. He would learn, for instance, that in Canada oil well drilling is increasing proportionately more than it is in the United States. He will also learn that, in the last year, the share of the revenues going to the industry in Canada was the same as it was in 1979, and it was a share that was larger by several billion dollars. In the last year the industry in Canada has benefited significantly from the energy programs of the Government.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, not one of the those states in the United States has an unemployment rate of 12 per cent. Today there are more people working in the United States than there were four years ago. In this country there are fewer people working now than there were four years ago. The fault lies with the Government, not with lazy Canadians.

REQUEST THAT FORMULA BE CHANGED

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, could I have an answer to my question? For direct job creation the Government uses a formula that is composed of labour surplus rates based on statistics that begin in April, 1979. We are talking about unemployment in 1984. The formula gives a bias to Liberal ridings for election purposes and creates second-class unemployed and first-class unemployed. Will the Government change the formula so that unemployed people who live

in Conservative ridings have an equal chance to get a job? All we are asking for is an equal chance.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, with the imputation that the Hon. Member has put behind his question, I do not believe that it even deserves an answer. I see Hon. Members of the Opposition rising constantly, brandishing figures from Statistics Canada and saying: "This independent agency has come forward with these figures." They then use the figures to attack the Government. Now the Hon. Member is saying that Statistics Canada is an organization with a Liberal bias. Members of the Conservative Party had better make up their minds about what they want to do and what they do not want to do.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT—REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER TAKE ACTION

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Prime Minister. As we all know, the Prime Minister has been admirably representing Canada overseas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: I will give the devil his due at times. However, today we have been trying to get across to the Prime Minister and the Government the importance of the youth unemployment situation. There are 800,000 young people who are unemployed. They are trying to find jobs, but they cannot find jobs. I wonder if, in his possibly last days, the Prime Minister would not make it a high priority to look at the youth unemployment situation, particularly at this time when so many young people are entering the job market from the high schools and universities. I am sure he is aware of the seriousness of the problems being faced by these young people.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is a very, very serious question, and I believe that many of today's previous answers have indicated that the Government is very much aware of this problem and is acting to alleviate as much as it can the unfortunate plight of the young unemployed. In the first answer I gave today, I believe that I indicated that 95 per cent of the funds allocated for Canada Summer Works have already been allocated. The Hon. Member can see from that that the Government is not only aware of the problem but is acting on it.

SOLUTION INQUIRY

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Prime Minister's concern. I wonder if the only solution to this widespread problem would be for young Canadians to wait until our Leader, a man who has the solutions to these problems, takes over?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would only say God help them if that is the only solution.