

Oral Questions

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT TAKE ACTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister can read very well. We now know why he was appointed Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Minister smiles there at his own cleverness and his infinite intellectual capacity in being able to read one of the Prime Minister's speeches. But I say to him a lot of unemployed Canadians out there do not take this matter as a joke, not one little bit.

If the Minister says now that there are sewers to be constructed, and if there are roads to be built, I say to him that there are sewers to be constructed now, roads to be built now, and why can the Government not do something now instead of waiting until January?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member asks why is the Government not doing something now. The Minister of Employment and Immigration has put out \$500 million in order to achieve employment objectives. Today he is consulting with one of the provincial governments in order to advance that program which is being put in place now, I tell the Hon. Member for Oshawa.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT, HIS EXCELLENCY KAMAL HASSAN ALI

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to call attention to the presence in our gallery of a distinguished visitor in the person of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Kamal Hassan Ali.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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MACDONALD ROYAL COMMISSION

QUALIFICATIONS OF CHAIRMAN

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is also addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister in regard to the appointment of former Finance Minister Donald Macdonald as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada. Considering the fact that, when Mr. Macdonald was Minister of Finance, his budget deficit nearly doubled from \$5 billion to more than \$8 billion and unemployment rose from 7 per cent to 8.2 per cent, what exactly were the economic qualifications for the chairmanship of this commission?

● (1430)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I

think anyone who knows the background of Mr. Donald Macdonald knows that he is uniquely qualified to head such a Royal Commission. He has had long and successful service in the House of Commons. He has acquired a knowledge of the economic situation both at home and abroad because of the responsibilities he has discharged in Canada. In recent years he has had considerable experience in the private sector.

Miss MacDonald: And as a Liberal!

Mr. MacEachen: I believe that this experience, combined with his acute intelligence and organizational ability, will provide the leadership that is required to make this an effective Royal Commission.

COMMENTS MADE BY FORMER AUDITOR GENERAL

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Deputy Prime Minister, if I could have his attention. He spoke about the unique record of Mr. Macdonald. I should like to point out that during his term as Finance Minister the Auditor General's report said that "financial management and control in the Government of Canada is grossly inadequate". The Lambert Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability said that under Macdonald's rule there was a "grave weakening and in some cases an almost total breakdown in the chain of accountability," first, within government and, second, within Parliament. How can Canadians have trust and confidence in a Chairman with that kind of track record?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member is going back to comments that were made several years ago by outside observers of the parliamentary scene.

Mr. Clark: The Auditor General.

Mr. MacEachen: I am sure if the Hon. Member had been in the House with Mr. Macdonald, he would have effectively answered any comments that were made.

Mr. Clark: No, he didn't; he quit and ran.

Mr. MacEachen: He told the House at that time that he had taken steps to correct these difficulties. Subsequent Ministers have done the same thing.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

NORTHERN CANADA POWER COMMISSION—SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The Report of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on the Northern Canada Power Commission