

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising the Prime Minister is not in the House today, considering the figures we have seen. If you want to bark, go bark outside!

My question is directed to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker.

I am not going to talk about the many promises made by the Minister during the election campaign. I just want to remind him it has now been about 100 days since the Government announced its commitments in the Throne Speech on November 5. As part of these commitments, the Minister announced a three-pronged strategy for creating employment for all Canadians. A few days later, the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board announced cutbacks totalling \$4 billion in job creation programs announced by the previous Government, although in his economic statement, the Minister said that this Government was going to create jobs. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

Today, considering the statistics showing that 167,000 more Canadians are unemployed, with increases in unemployment occurring in all provinces, is the Minister prepared to admit before the House today that his policy has failed and that his sole achievement has been to produce an average of 1670 unemployed Canadians per day?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the Hon. Member is that the policy of the previous Government was a complete failure and that is why the people voted for the Conservative Party last September 4—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —to see a change in Government and a change in policy. I believe that the Hon. Member is displaying a lack of understanding of economic policy if he expects that something done in November is going to have an immediate impact in January or February. We are working in the right direction. We are convinced that the broad direction which we sent out, and the specific areas of policy which were set out in the economic statement in November, are the right way. We never promised a quick fix. We never promised that it was going to happen overnight. But it is going in the right direction, and it is very clear from the economic statistics which we have seen over a period of time that we are moving in the right direction.

I caution the Hon. Member not simply to take one month's figures and say that that is a sign of failure, because Canadians are too smart for that.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, the Minister says I do not understand economic policy. Be that as it may, I do understand the human factor involved. I am speaking on behalf of 1,500,000 unemployed Canadians.

My supplementary is as follows: Since the Minister answered my colleague that he did not want to bring down a budget, is he prepared to follow my example and tear up this document and release \$4 billion worth of job creation programs?

[English]

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that Canadians are impressed with the histrionics that the Hon. Member has demonstrated today. What people are looking for is a stable series of policies that will address clearly the economic problems that we inherited as a Government. People saw that in the November 8 statement. They saw that we are on the right track and know that over time this is going to have a clear set—

[Translation]

Mr. Malépart: People are interested in jobs, not speeches!

[English]

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I think if the Hon. Member would close his mouth and listen, he might be able to learn something.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): If the Hon. Member is not going to listen, it does not make much sense to answer the question.

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● (1125)

THE ECONOMY

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the figures released today are truly alarming. An increase in unemployment of 167,000 people in one month is the largest one month increase in five years. The situation is truly alarming. It is the direct consequence of the Conservative cut-backs announced in the fall. Instead of increasing confidence and assurance as promised to the people of Canada, we are getting feelings of increasing economic deprivation. That is what the Government has delivered.

Now that the Minister has seen the consequences of his massive cut-back approach which we have previously seen in British Columbia, which the people of England have seen as well, when will he reverse the policy and produce the jobs the Conservatives promised?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me make it quite plain to the Hon. Member that I am not