

*Oral Questions***AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

It is expected that the G-7 countries will grow by something like 1.7 per cent this year. There has been an increase in the unemployment numbers in the G-7 countries of some five million over the last two years. That has had a direct impact upon the economy of Canada.

I remind the hon. member that notwithstanding all the difficulties, there are 12,240,000 Canadians who are working in this country. We would like to see fewer people unemployed. Some of the initiatives that were outlined by the Prime Minister last night are things that we are developing. We will build upon the budget initiatives we brought down in February which are indeed working and strengthening—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the minister will be able to expand on the supplemental.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the 25 per cent unemployed in east end Montreal, Snowdon and Côte des Neiges are not going to get much comfort from those remarks.

[*Translation*]

According to data from the Quebec construction commission, the unemployment rate in that industry is about 50 per cent. Is the Minister of Finance prepared to announce immediately a program to rebuild infrastructure and renovate buildings in order to create jobs for these workers, as the Leader of the Opposition has already proposed, or will he wait until the unemployment rate is 100 per cent?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has addressed some of the points made by the hon. member. I would be interested in knowing how she proposes to pay for this sort of infrastructure spending, recognizing that the focus in Canada is on its level of debt, the burden of debt, not only at the federal level but at the provincial level.

I remind the hon. member that the unemployment figures are going down, not going up. There has been an improvement of 64,000 new jobs created in the last six months. Eighty-three thousand new jobs have been created in September and October of a permanent nature. While it is a slow recovery, consistent with the recovery that is going on globally, it is nevertheless a recovery and it is moving in a progressive way and not in a negative way.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Yesterday in this House we talked about the devastation that is imminent in the airline industry because of the policies of the Conservative government and the former Liberal government on deregulation. Today I want to raise with the minister the devastation that the policy has brought to Atlantic Canada.

• (1440)

Canadian Pacific Railway announced this morning it is its intention to seek permission of the National Transportation Agency to rip up every single track of theirs from Sherbrooke, Quebec, to Saint John, New Brunswick, as well as all their tracks in Nova Scotia. Will the Minister of Transport use the government's authority under section 23 of the National Transportation Act and instruct the NTA to reject any request to abandon any main line track by any railroad anywhere in Canada? Will he do that to protect Atlantic Canada?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if I understand the hon. member correctly, he would have us take steps to make businesses lose even more money so that job losses might be even greater in a few months.

There is a procedure in place. CP Rail announced this morning its intention to submit a request to the National Transportation Agency to abandon these lines. The agency will hear the representations from all sides, from the users and from government. Every citizen or group who wishes to make representations may do so by contacting the National Transportation agency. The agency will assess the situation and give a ruling in August 1993.

[*English*]

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the minister and the House that the National Transportation Act says that transportation is recognized as a key to regional and economic development and commercial viability of transportation links is balanced with regional economic development objectives