

Oral Questions

Since it is the task of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to promote employment in the country's poorer areas and also to assist small business, can the hon. Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce tell us how he can help the Department of Regional Economic Expansion achieve this goal when 37 of 40 members of the advisory council are owners or presidents of Canada's major businesses, located in this country's major cities in the most prosperous regions?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. minister might perhaps reply briefly to the hon. member's question. I am sure, however, that the hon. member for Shefford will be the first to recognize that he has expressed an argument rather than a question. However, to be fair to the hon. member for Shefford, I am prepared to give the floor to the hon. minister if he wants to reply briefly.

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, my colleague the Minister of Regional Expansion and myself do not require an advisory council to tell us how we should address ourselves to the problems of small business. I am sure the hon. member will appreciate that we are in constant consultation and so are our departments.

[Translation]

Mr. Rondeau: I would like to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Could the hon. Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce tell the House whether the activities of his department are in agreement with those of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion as regards assistance to small business and especially employment in the poorer areas?

[English]

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, we have a basic responsibility for trying to develop the health, viability and competitiveness of manufacturing industry throughout the country and, as well, the health, viability and service of the tourism industry of Canada. I think that our responsibilities and the special but distinct responsibilities of my colleagues are complementary.

[Translation]

COMPOSITION OF CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL—
DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC
EXPANSION

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): I wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

In view of the statement made by the hon. minister as to existing common interests between both departments, could he tell the House whether there has been consultation with his colleague, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, as to the selection of the 37 members of the advisory council who represent large enterprise only?

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta.

[Mr. Rondeau.]

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Lotbinière on a point of order.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister was about to answer but the interpretation did not reach him on time. I would like to ask him again if there was consultation between the two departments.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has already asked this question. I guess that during the last 30 seconds the question must have reached the minister; maybe he can answer right away. I was not under the impression that he intended to answer, but if he wants to, I will recognize him.

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, there is a very high degree of consultation among ministers on this side of the House. The point that I should also like to make clear to the hon. member is that my advisory council is not just composed of big businessmen; it is also composed of businessmen representing smaller businesses situated in all corners of the country.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

PETITION FOR CONTROLS ON FOOD PRICES— GOVERNMENT POSITION—POWERS OF PROPOSED PRICES REVIEW BOARD

Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the petition presented today from British Columbia residents, and in view of the many other similar requests from both consumer and producer groups, is the Prime Minister now prepared to acknowledge officially that there is a growing demand for direct controls, as has been recommended by the Leader of the Opposition and others?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Equally, Mr. Speaker, I met a group yesterday that was against controls as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

An hon. Member: That was the cabinet.

Mr. Trudeau: I suppose there is a growing demand for all kinds of things in this country.

Mr. Reynolds: Is the government going to set out the powers and directions for the prices review board and, if so, when will these guidelines be brought before the House?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member might want to direct his question to the minister who spoke on this subject in the House a couple of days ago.