

Oral Questions

the radar updating and helicopter production projects of the Federal Government. Can the Prime Minister tell us why companies in this field are not interested in developing in Quebec and even less in locating in that province and why they resist any federal attempt to safeguard the economic interests of Quebec?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Well, Madam Speaker, it is probably because a number of companies have come to realize, like some P.Q. Members themselves, according to what the Hon. Member said in his question, a fact that the voters have recognized for quite some time, namely that the P.Q. Government is hindering the economic future of Quebec. We should be thankful that some P.Q. Members realize that the Federal Government promotes technological development in Quebec and that asking Federal Members of Parliament for help is a better solution than asking their own Government!

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[English]

NEW EMPLOYMENT EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

TREATMENT OF APPLICATION MADE BY ENGINEER

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I have a constituent who is a professional engineer. There is a job available with the Halton region for his services that will be partially paid for under the NEED Program. Upon visiting the Manpower offices to submit his name for the job, he was advised that he did not qualify because he has two more months of U.I. benefits available to him, after which he must then apply for welfare. In other words, providing he is unemployed, and has exhausted all his benefits and has applied for welfare, only then will he be qualified to apply for the job under the NEED Program.

Does the Minister not agree that these are degrading criteria when an unemployed engineer cannot qualify for a job requiring his professional services until he has exhausted all his benefits and been accepted for welfare? Surely this is wrong and must be changed.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I refer the Hon. Member back to the various documents we put forward under the NEED Program which indicated that its first priority was to provide alternative jobs for those who had exhausted UI benefits. The logic of that, I think, is quite clear. For many of those who had exhausted their benefits and had no other forms of income, working with the Government of Ontario and other provincial Governments would assure they had income and a job at the same time.

For those who would still be able to benefit from unemployment insurance, they still have income coming into the home

and, therefore, have less of a priority. But I want to make clear, Madam Speaker, that does not prevent them from working on these projects. Each project put forward under the NEED Program can bring in skilled people, whether they are engineers or tradesmen who are necessary to help make the project operate. Therefore, they are eligible under those particular conditions.

Mr. Kempling: Madam Speaker, I am aware of all of that.

Madam Speaker, I read the Minister's release of May 10. The difficulty is that no one in Toronto, Hamilton or Burlington knows anything about it. I talked to people on the phone this morning. Is the program set forth in the Minister's memo of May 10 that would allow this engineer to qualify for that project in force today, right now? If it is, I will call those offices and inform them, if the Minister of Employment and Immigration cannot.

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, those regulations were in force at the time and telexes were sent to all regional centres to inform them of that fact.

Mr. Kempling: They do not know about it.

Mr. Axworthy: If there is a problem in this particular office in Burlington, I will certainly check into it. But I want to assure the Hon. Member that the new set of criteria is available. They have been sent to all the regions and they should know about it. If not, we will find out why.

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AVIATION INDUSTRY

POSSIBLE CANADIAN ROLE IN AIRBUS PROJECT

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a question related to the one asked by the Hon. Member for Megantic-Compton Stanstead, for the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister tell the House whether the Canadian Government is engaged in or considering any negotiations with respect to Canadian participation in the launching of the A-320, a 150-passenger airbus aircraft? If the Government is so engaged and considering such negotiations, what industrial benefits are expected to accrue to Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I know that several months ago the Government was approached to look at the possibility of being part of a consortium, I believe of the British, French, and German Governments regarding a new airbus. I do not know whether it is the A-320 or what, but I do know there were exploratory talks. I can assure the Hon. Member that there has been no decision taken, and for the details of where those talks are at I will take notice of the question or ask the Hon. Member to address his question either to the Minister responsible for industry or perhaps to the Minister of Transport. I am not quite sure which of the two Ministers is responsible for this.