

Oral Questions

There are bands in my riding that have a housing backlog of more than 20 units but no funds are available from the federal government, so band members have to move off reserve. What happens then? By the refusal of the federal government to live up to the treaty right for shelter, the Conservatives are forcing band members off the reserve who then become the financial responsibility of the province's welfare system.

The federal government is saving twice by not providing housing and by forcing provinces to pay sustenance costs through their welfare systems. This is cheating. The government should be ashamed.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Madam Speaker, the effects of unemployment are becoming increasingly widespread from year to year. The higher unemployment rate experienced by regions like Chicoutimi—Jonquière, which at 16 per cent has the highest rate in Quebec, followed by Trois—Rivières, Montreal and Sherbrooke, confirms the failure of the policies of the Conservative government that will not recognize the destructive impact of the free trade agreement it negotiated.

Although media reports mentioned a recovery in the manufacturing sector, we see that in Quebec, unemployment continues to rise in this sector. The lack of programs to help industries through the transition during the past four years is a sign of the weakness of this government. The negative impact of free trade, combined with a lack of training in technological skills and the increased tax burden on the middle class, have not only further weakened the Canadian economy but also led to the creation of an underground economy, unfortunately.

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[English]

CHILDREN

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, people who I represent have always expressed concern for law and order issues. However recently there has been a dramatic increase in their communica-

tions to me in regard to two issues that are now before us in this House. One issue of course is child pornography. The other issue relates to child abuse. I have been overwhelmed by their support for these pieces of legislation.

• (1115)

To date I have heard from over 1,000 people living in my riding, from the communities of Williams Lake, Quesnel, 100 Mile House, Alexis Creek. The list of communities goes on. This legislation is seen by them as a commitment to the children of Canada. The people I represent want to see this commitment embedded in the Criminal Code.

They have asked me to express to all members in the House the importance of ensuring that these issues receive our careful attention. Therefore, when we rise for the summer it will be with the knowledge that Canadian children will be better protected.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

This government has one week left and all we are hearing from the leadership candidates is what a great economic job it has done. What a joke.

At the time of the last election there were one million Canadians looking for work. Today there are 1.6 million Canadians who do not have jobs. Since the last election the unemployment rate has shot up by 60 per cent.

There are 41,000 jobless in Hamilton and more to come, thanks to this government's ridiculous trade policies. There are 45,000 jobless in Calgary. Almost 500,000 people in Toronto are looking for work.

How can the government say it is on the right economic track when so many more people are hurting today?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I want to draw to the hon. member's attention the good economic news that is coming out daily.