

INDUSTRY

PROSPECTS FOR FORT ERIE HELICOPTER PROJECT

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce who is involved in a Cabinet meeting behind the curtain. I understand that the Minister will soon be announcing a deal involving the federal and provincial Governments, Fleet Industries of Fort Erie, and a German helicopter firm.

As the Minister knows, this year the Niagara region has been twice cited as the unemployment capital of the country. First, is it true that Fleet will get the helicopter deal and, second, if it is true, when will the Minister make the announcement?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, my experience in public office, both at the local level and at the federal level, is such that I believe premature discussions and announcements usually lead to very disappointing results. I would request that the Hon. Member refrain from discussing this issue until such time that we finalize negotiations with the company.

Mr. Fretz: I am not sure I appreciate the Minister's answer.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, since hundreds of jobs are at stake in my riding, would the Minister do everything in his power to assist Fleet in getting this deal?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member is serious about these jobs, I think, as I have suggested to him privately and now publicly, that the least said publicly during negotiations usually leads to more productive results.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

REQUEST FOR EXPANDED JOB-CREATION PROGRAMS TO INCLUDE FEMALES

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, last night the Prime Minister was the absent host for a lounge suit reception for women attending the federal consultations. Obviously, boogeying with Barbra in New York took precedence over the serious economic concerns of Canadian women.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mrs. Mitchell: My question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Since the Government's job creation record for women has been very dismal, when only 20 per cent of NEED jobs went to women, what action will the

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Minister take, in co-operation with the Minister of Employment and Immigration, to expand job-creation programs to guarantee this year that women will have jobs at least equal to their participation in the labour force?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of Members of the House that last night's reception was co-hosted by three of us, including the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and the Secretary of State. We had a very successful event. I must also say that the Prime Minister's Office was very well represented at last evening's function and that this Government is hosting three days of consultations with the women of Canada, which began very effectively this morning.

I might add that we made absolutely sure that the Members opposite were also invited to the reception and very few bothered to turn out.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

• (1440)

Mrs. Erola: I might also add that the employment figures which the Hon. Member has suggested are not the actual figures, and that the number of women employed in the NEED program are much higher than the statistics to which she has referred. Yes, the Minister of Employment and Immigration and I are working very seriously toward very specific programs aimed at the retraining of women.

SERVICES FOR FEMALE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister responsible for the status of women. Battered women need protection now, as was promised in the House of Commons Standing Committee. They do not need just a federal-provincial report card, due in June, 1984, which is one of the things that came out of the meeting the Minister held last spring. What is the federal Government prepared to do right now to prevent further cuts in transition house services in British Columbia and other Provinces, and also to provide the kind of shelter that is urgently needed by women in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am shocked—

Mr. McDermid: You are always shocked.

Mrs. Erola:—that the Hon. Member is not aware of all this Government has done in that area. As a matter of fact, last year as soon as the report was released this Government moved to finance more transition homes. We released 150 units immediately. We have exceeded that by at least 20 units in the past year. We have funded more transition homes in the past three years. I would suggest to the Hon. Member that she have