

Oral Questions

go back into school. As well, we have the "Hire-A-Student Program", where we have something like 400 offices across Canada which undertake to work with the private sector to provide jobs for young people.

I would say beyond that, Madam Speaker, Hon. Members of this Caucus have been working very extensively over the past several months to develop a number of proposals related to youth employment, and they have submitted them to the different Ministers to examine as part of an over-all employment package, which we are examining as part of a buildup toward the new budget. Hon. Members of this Caucus and of this Government have been looking at the kinds of additional initiatives which we can take, and we would hope to be in a position to put them forward at the time the Minister of Finance brings his budget forward.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON STUDENT JOB PROSPECTS

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, that initiative and that process do not seem to be working because I have it on the authority of the Minister himself, when he told a group of students on Friday last at the University of Manitoba, "They should prepare for a jobless summer as there is an initial lag between economic recovery and improving job markets." That outrageous statement by this Minister responsible for job creation was made in his own city of Winnipeg to the students of the University of Manitoba. That is a disgraceful cop-out by the Minister. How does the Minister reconcile that statement with what he is now saying in the House?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I believe one of the responsibilities of any Minister is to talk to the people of Canada, including the young people, people of all regions, in a realistic way, and not to try to fool them with exaggeration, hyperbole and rhetoric, which we constantly hear from this Hon. Member of Parliament. What we should be doing is talking common sense to them and discussing with them how we can arrive at a solution. I would point out, Madam Speaker, if the Hon. Member and his colleagues are looking for solutions, the announcement which we made yesterday has a potential of creating something like 350,000 jobs. If they, and the Members of the New Democratic Party, are so interested in employment, they should get behind this proposal which is the biggest job-creation effort this country has ever undertaken.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NIGERIA—EXPULSION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister, and it relates to the tragic situation in West Africa. The Prime Minister will know

of the harsh and precipitous action on the part of the Government of Nigeria in expelling an estimated two million migrant workers. Would the Prime Minister tell this House what representations the Government of Canada has made to the Government of Nigeria?

Mr. Trudeau: Do you know the answer? I do not.

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs I want to tell the Hon. Member that the Government of Canada is monitoring the situation in Nigeria with great concern. We have received requests for assistance with reference to this matter from Togo, and from the International Red Cross, and steps are being taken to react to those requests. Our officials are in touch with the appropriate officials of that country, and that organization. We are doing all that is possible to be helpful in this tragic situation.

REQUESTS FOR CANADIAN ASSISTANCE

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, the question was not regarding assistance to those affected, but what representations has this Government made on this, the second largest expulsion of migrant workers in recent history?

• (1450)

Pursuing the Minister's comments about the willingness of the Canadian Government to be of assistance, may I ask him if the Government has made any offers, particularly to the Government of Ghana, where 1.5 million of these refugees are heading home? For example, is the Canadian Government prepared to assist the Red Cross and church agencies, and will it send Hercules aircraft to assist in the evacuation?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, may I say to the Hon. Member that while we have received some preliminary inquiries about humanitarian assistance we have only had the two specific requests that I mentioned. We stand ready to respond to requests as soon as the character of the requirements can be defined. What the Hon. Member has said about aircraft is something that can be determined in our contacts to ascertain exactly what help is required of Canada.

Along with the neighbouring states, we recognize that the Nigerian action, unfortunately, falls within the authority of that Government. It parallels action that has been taken by other Governments. We regret, however, the hasty application of the order that has led to considerable hardship for the people there and in the neighbouring countries.

I can only reiterate to the Hon. Member that it is a situation that our officials are following closely. We have indicated our willingness to respond to requests for help, and are attempting to ascertain what help can best be provided by Canada from this distance.