

• (1120)

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think what the strength of the dollar does indicate is the inherent strength of the Canadian economy. In spite of the hon. member wanting to downgrade the prospects for the future of the Canadian economy, I think the other point of view should be expressed as it is by organizations like the IMF which suggests that Canada's rate of growth will be 3.8 per cent next year. The OECD suggested that Canada's rate of growth will be 3.5 per cent. Why? Because we have the fundamentals right.

If the hon. member has any suggestions about the value of the dollar, maybe she might like to enlighten the House as to what she considers to be an appropriate value of the dollar, how she would get it there and how she would keep it there. Perhaps she might want to take Canadians into their confidence because quite frankly she is proposing simplistic solutions that are totally unworkable.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, why does he not listen to the Canadian Steel Producers Association which told the government several months ago that this dollar policy was killing the Canadian steel industry? Why is he pursuing the government policies that are costing Canadians thousands and thousands of jobs?

Will the minister understand that every cent the dollar goes up is literally costing thousands of Canadian jobs. Will he today follow the recommendations of his colleague, the member for Burlington South, who endorsed the position taken by the Canadian Steel Producers Association that we should have a lower dollar? Will he do that?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the government does not set the value of the dollar. The rate of exchange of the dollar is established in the marketplace.

If the hon. member is suggesting that Canada should go to a fixed exchange rate, if that is the policy of the Liberal Party, why does she not come clean and tell

Canadians that is their policy? She cannot have it both ways.

Oral Questions

JOB TRAINING

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

This morning we learned of yet another shell game practice by this government. Reports indicate that the only funds this government could find for training is the \$400 million it has squeezed out of unemployed Canadians: no new moneys, no new commitment from this government, money taken away from unemployed Canadians.

We know that the employers have paid their share. We know that the employees have paid their share. We know that the unemployed Canadians have already paid their share. When is this government going to pay its share?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the fallacy of the Liberal thinking persists. Where is that money coming from? He is forgetting about the Canadian Jobs Strategy. There is a program for 1991 of \$1.9 billion. It is not much money I guess to a Liberal to go in the pockets of taxpayers and pick up \$1.9 billion.

The Liberals should come clean with Canadians and tell us if we should increase the deficit or borrow more. They should make their stand clear. He is not. He is trying to make people believe that \$3.1 billion is no money for workers who are in need of training.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, the question here is whether or not we are committed to the unemployed Canadians and to training.

Despite the rhetoric the government has continuously increased UI premiums and has cut \$200 million from the Canadian Jobs Strategy in the last two years. It has completely divorced itself from its responsibilities to the unemployed. Canadians are tired of this sleight of hand, of this disappearing act in the areas of training and unemployment.

Halloween was last night. When will the government stop tricking Canadians and treat Canadians with dignity and respect?