

Oral Questions

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER TAKE ACTION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, what is the Prime Minister of Canada going to do in Canada to help Canadians?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the finance minister has said he would make an economic statement. I know—because the member for Yukon just shouted it across the way—that it will not be acceptable to the opposition, no matter what it contains. But we are not trying to please the opposition, Madam Speaker. We are trying, in these very difficult economic circumstances, where once again the economies of the world are in difficulty, economies where there are now five million more unemployed today than there were at the Summit meeting in Ottawa a year ago, just amongst the OECD countries—we are trying in Canada to find ways in which Canadians will be able to weather the storm better than other countries. That is the extent to which we will be able to show action in this Parliament, Madam Speaker, not standing up in an histrionic way voicing indignation, not by attacking each other, but by constructively—the provincial and federal governments—trying to find ways in which we can keep the economy on an even keel in spite of the difficulties.

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● (1425)

[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY
FUNDING FOR SERVICES

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

[English]

The Prime Minister will know that bad economic policy creates victims. We have experienced a 2 per cent increase in unemployment in Canada. From that flows the fact that we can expect an 8 per cent increase in suicides, a 10 per cent increase in homicides, an 8 per cent increase in prison admissions, a 7 per cent increase in hospital admissions—

Madam Speaker: Order. Question. No preamble of that nature. That is not a short question.

Mr. Hawkes: Merci, Madame le Président. I would like to ask the Prime Minister specifically if in the so-called economic statement there will be a significant increase in funding to help the victims of bad economic policy. Will there be more money for hospitals and social services?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has been very patient thus far. I suggest he wait until the minister makes his statement, and he will be able to judge its content. I hope he will have a more open mind as to that content than his colleague, the hon. member for Yukon.

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION MEETING

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce have denied in this House that those social consequences flow from unemployment. There is to be a special seminar on June 24 in Toronto, held by the Canadian Mental Health Association, at which preventive strategies to reduce mental health service demands consequent to employment loss in Canada communities will be discussed. Will the Prime Minister make sure that either of those two cabinet ministers—or at least one cabinet minister—attends that conference and learns about the problem before it is too late?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I did not catch the date of the conference, but I will read the “blues” and find out if it is possible for any member of this party to attend that conference.

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THE ECONOMY

JOB CREATION POLICY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It was the Prime Minister at Versailles who said that current economic policies of the government were creating unacceptable levels of unemployment. Meanwhile in the House during the past week it was the Minister of Finance who was saying, in complete contradiction, that no basic change in policy could be expected and that the most Canadians could expect would be marginal changes. Surely if we are going to deal with the unacceptable level of unemployment, a major shift in policy is required, including the scrapping of the old budget.

Will the Prime Minister at least assure the House that the government will bring in a major shift in policy which will see as its principal objective the creation of more jobs for the millions of Canadians who need them?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I must take exception to the way the question was phrased. If the hon. member was purporting to quote me when he said I had said that the Canadian government's policy was causing major unemployment or unreasonable unemployment, I assure him that is not the message I was trying to convey. I will have occasion, perhaps at another time, to explain what I was saying. I was saying, on the contrary, that I hope that industrialized democracies would find other ways of solving the problem of inflation than by causing high unemployment. I was saying exactly the contrary to what the hon. member was implying I was saying.

As to what the statement of the minister will contain, I have to give the hon. member the same answer I gave to members of the official opposition: it will be up to the New Democratic Party to make up its mind as to what qualities it will attribute or not attribute to the statement made by the minister. I think the minister is correct when he says that, by and large, our