

the United States economy is in fact strengthening and that is positive news for Canada.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the same minister. The minister's mantra is as inaccurate as it is boring.

[Translation]

According to the Conference Board of Canada, this country is going through its longest period of economic stagnation in 30 years. Last week, I met former employees of Sidbec; two weeks ago, it was former textile workers; a month ago, former workers in the pulp and paper industry. All these people are in their fifties and have been laid off for good. I will ask the minister the question they asked me: Where will we find jobs in the future?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have acknowledged on many occasions in the House the difficult period that Canada is going through, and Canada is not alone.

The hon. member will know the anticipated growth for all the OECD nations is something in the order of 1.6 per cent or 1.7 per cent for 1992, which is hardly robust. They also indicated the high levels of unemployment will persist in all the industrialized countries, I think something like 30 million unemployed people, and that is a challenge for all governments, including this one. It also is compounded by the fact we are going through a structural change in terms of our economy.

As I indicated in the House yesterday, I find the Conference Board of Canada's projections overly pessimistic. I think that view is shared by the business community, at least in Ottawa. I quote from *The Ottawa Sun* today: "Area businessmen said they were surprised and angry at the board's latest economic forecast". They said that messages like the one the Conference Board is sending out contribute to consumer pessimism rather than confidence.

I think there are a number of positive indicators which indicate that the economy is strengthening. It is not robust. It is not as robust as the hon. member would like to see it, nor is it as robust as I would like to see it.

Oral Questions

I think he would agree with me that the fundamentals are right. Interest rates have fallen again today. Inflation is at an all-time low. So we have the framework and the basis for sustainable growth and price stability.

That is what we are trying to achieve.

[Translation]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Conference Board of Canada predicted today that the growth rate of the Canadian economy would be the worst of the G-7 countries and our unemployment rate the highest and one of the worst in the western world. Nevertheless, in the midst of all this bad news, many jobless Canadians are now receiving letters from the federal government, letters like this one, telling them that they will no longer have funds during the waiting period necessary to obtain training under section 26 of the act.

Will the federal government provide the necessary funds for this program so that the unemployed can have the training they need to get a job?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should recognize and admit that the additional funds provided under section 26 of the Unemployment Insurance Act throughout the country, and especially in Ontario, have tripled this year.

It is true that unemployed Canadians ask for this additional training so that they can hold new jobs with greater skills. Do not believe that we are insensitive to this demand.

But I would ask the hon. member to consider that the federal government alone provides 76 per cent of all the funds to train Canadian workers. The provinces want jurisdiction over worker training, but they spend only 24 per cent of all the funds allocated for this purpose in Canada.

We are now looking at our own budget in Employment and Immigration to see how we can accommodate the increased demand from workers—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt you. The hon. member for Yukon.