

Oral Questions

any industrial country in the world. The unemployment rate for young people dropped a full two percentage points during the same period of time.

We are living up to our commitment to create jobs. If the hon. member would go back to her own riding and look at it, she would see that the job rate dropped over the past 11 months by 3.1 per cent. It is now below 9 per cent. That is real job creation.

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Minister of Human Resources Development is not pleased that 1,364,000 people are still without work, not counting all those who are looking for work and are not declared as unemployed.

• (1425)

Does the minister admit that if he had wanted to do just one thing to help create jobs, he should have reduced unemployment insurance premiums in September, when he knew that the fund had ten times as much as he wanted when he promised to reduce UI premiums: \$2.7 billion compared to \$240 million?

Young people would have benefited the most from these new jobs.

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that on January 1 the premium rate on unemployment insurance drops down to \$3 per hundred. We have already taken the step we committed to in the last budget and the premium rate is coming down.

While the hon. member is exaggerating a number of figures, I remind her that she should recognize at the end of this year the cumulative deficit for the UI fund will be over \$3 billion. Until we get that cumulative deficit down, because it is a real drag on the economy, we will not be in a position to make changes. By the time of the next budget I am sure we will be in a position to have a better report or a better analysis. In the meantime we have to move to get that \$3 billion deficit out of the way.

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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, one of the promises in the red book was for more transparent government. I have not read the fine print but I do not think that meant government leaks.

Today the industry minister's orange paper takes its place with the GST report, the HRD green book, the justice minister's action plan on gun control and the defence white paper. All were

conveniently leaked to the media before the official announcements were made. The government's complete disregard for Parliament reinforces fears of Liberal arrogance.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Why is the government showing such disdain for the House of Commons and what is it doing to end these leaks?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member that it was out of a desire to present the next paper in our series of papers on the economy that I decided to make the presentation in the House of Commons this afternoon, which I will be doing immediately following question period.

For that matter, I want the hon. member to know that there is no obligation either under the rules of the House or otherwise to make such a presentation in the House. I want to assure him that we will be very interested in hearing his support for a plan which should help build a more innovative economy.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government totally missed the point.

The problem is that leaks are occurring and they are unprecedented. Leaks to the media must be at the top of every government communications plan. The government leaks like a badly fitting diaper. The government is making a mockery of the House of Commons with every proposal it produces. While opposition MPs are sworn to secrecy and they are stuck in departmental lockups, Liberal spin doctors are out descending on the media like locusts.

My supplementary question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Are these leaks part of a deliberate communications strategy on the part of the government?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a certain amount of experience with fitting diapers. We always preferred the reusable rather than the disposable in our household.

I assure the hon. member it would be of very great concern if information were leaked that could either affect the markets or could lead to somebody prospering inadvertently or indirectly. In the case of the information I have seen published as a result of these documents having reached the public domain, no such case will occur.

I assure him that the participation of members of Parliament in discussion coming from the proposals we put forward in the action plan is of great importance to us.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I could quote instances when the Liberals were on this side of the House and they condemned the government for leaks. They are promoting more leaks that are far worse than the previous government did.