

Oral Questions

Mr. Crosbie:—and of the Minister of Finance, who at least has the excuse of a sore throat, I will put my final supplementary to one of the page boys.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order. I have the feeling that we are in for a rough question period. I think we should start off right now by disciplining ourselves.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, at least the page boys might show some concern about the 887,000 unemployed. For my final supplementary I will try the Prime Minister again. His flower is fading today. He does not have his usual bright red flower. Something is wrong with him today.

The OECD has predicted that the Canadian economy will have its worst performance since 1954. That is really something. On June 10 the Minister of Finance stated in this House that it was desirable to maintain the battle against the inflation. Would the Prime Minister explain to the House what his policies are to maintain this battle against inflation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): You just said I was absent.

Mr. Crosbie: You certainly are absent. You are absent from any sense of decency or responsibility.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Ask the page boy.

Mr. Crosbie: In the absence of the Prime Minister, again, perhaps I can ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce whether he will show some concern about the 887,000 unemployed. What is his new industrial strategy to put these people to work? The rate has increased for the last six consecutive months. The Prime Minister cannot answer. Will the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce tell us what the government's policy is going to be?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I am sorry my hon. friend was not in the House yesterday. We set out our policy at that time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. We do not want the whole question period to be taken up by heckling and cheering, do we?

HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT IN ONTARIO

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Madam Speaker, it is a shocking thing to have such indifference about unemployment in this country. If the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is not concerned about the unemployed in Canada, perhaps he is concerned about the unemployed in Ontario; 75 per cent of the unemployment increase since February last

year, when he and his government took power, has been in Ontario. His own city now has 15 per cent unemployment. Will he explain that to the House? Why has he turned on his own province and his own city and allowed such unemployment?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, we began taking decisive action on these matters even before we became the government, by leading the attack on the incompetent Conservatives, throwing them out—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gray:—and bringing about a change of government to a new Liberal government which is capable of and is taking decisive action on behalf of Canadian and Ontario workers.

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is again to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. If his attack has been so successful, could he explain to the House why unemployment has gone up every month in Ontario since he has been in office to the point that there are now 22,000 out of work in Windsor, compared with 11,000 when he took office? Why are there 46,000 more people out of work in Ontario today than when he took office, if his attack has been so successful?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, one reason—as far as I am concerned, at least—is that we have not yet overcome the negative effects on the economy of the Conservative government.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: You used that line for six months.

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NORTHERN PIPELINES

ALASKA GAS PIPELINE—POLICY RESPECTING PRE-BUILD SECTION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister which arises directly from his press conference this morning, and it concerns the important matter of the pipeline. The Northern Pipeline Act clearly states:

The company shall before the commencement of construction . . . establish to the satisfaction of the minister . . . that financing has been obtained for the pipeline.

● (1425)

Elsewhere in the act “pipeline” is defined to mean a pipeline “from Alaska across Canada”; that is to say, the pipeline is indivisible. Considering that at the press conference this morning the Prime Minister said that if the act said what I have just quoted—it says it in very clear language—the government would either be prohibited from going ahead with the pre-build or would have to amend the legislation. I should like to