

Oral Questions

Of course our hon. friend from the opposition should know that in the labour department two years ago, we introduced a program to help the people who are laid off temporarily.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, what they want are not measures that lay them off, they want their jobs back.

[Translation]

Here is my question to the government opposite: 656 trucking companies in Canada went bankrupt in one year and now, the fourth biggest company in this country did the same. When is this government going to wake up? And why do we let one of the biggest Canadian industries slowly die in order to please the Americans?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I must remind my honourable colleague opposite that this government is precisely working hard to create jobs for Canadians, as it has been doing since 1984, with more than one and a half million of new jobs created in Canada, and we will continue to do so. In the Throne Speech, we indicated that we will proceed on the road to prosperity by making all Canadian industries more competitive so that more jobs are in store for Canadians.

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[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister for constitutional affairs.

As the minister knows, our committee on the amending formula has just finished travelling across this country holding public hearings. Everywhere we went, the consensus was that people want a constituent assembly to deal with the Constitution. The people want more than just the politicians to be involved in the committee on our constitutional future.

• (1440)

In light of that and in light of the fact the minister has said he wants to build in this country a non-partisan consensus on the Constitution, I want him to explain to this House why he pre-empted that committee report and decided not to go to a constituent assembly at this

time. Would he now reconsider that decision and include in that committee next fall not only elected politicians but non-politicians representing the ordinary people of this country?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I have particular reason to know from our experience together in this House the depth of his commitment to imaginative and genuine responses to achieving goals of national unity in the country. I look forward to working with him. I assure him that I have not pre-empted the report of the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, which we look forward to receiving.

We have taken the decision regarding the phase of constitutional discussion which will begin in September. There was a question as to whether we should, as a government, respond to what is a very clear cynicism about politicians in the country by contributing to that cynicism by simply saying that politicians, elected people, will no longer be entrusted to carry out the responsibilities that have traditionally been ours.

We have taken the decision that we should not succumb to that cynicism, that we should instead give elected members of this House, and members of the Senate, the opportunity to demonstrate our capacity in the most open, innovative way to serve the interests of the country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, what the Beaudoin-Edwards committee heard from coast to coast was that the old ways are not good enough, that we have to take a courageous step to find a new way to unite this country.

I ask the minister of constitutional affairs why should Canadians have any confidence in this government listening to this newly conceived joint parliamentary committee when they have pre-empted the Beaudoin-Edwards parliamentary committee?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we certainly have not pre-empted the committee whose recommendations I have not seen, but which I look forward to receiving. I believe that it is the view of other members of the House that that committee