

Oral Questions

tremendous interest to the whole country. We are very keen on setting up biotechnology centres in Canada, and especially in the Province of Quebec, because the Government of that province is also very interested. The project in question, the UNIDO project, was not very attractive to us because of the terms and conditions set by this organization. However, that does not mean we are not interested. On the contrary, we are eager to act in this area across the country, and as I said at the beginning of my comments, especially in the Province of Quebec.

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● (1450)

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

PROJECTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Is he aware of the data released recently by Data Resources of Canada which show that unemployment will continue at 1982 levels through 1983, 1984, and into 1985? If he is aware of that unfortunate level of unemployment, would he indicate what concrete steps we may anticipate to relieve that situation?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have not seen the particular figures which have been put out by Data Resources. I am aware of a number of forecasts, some of which are more optimistic than others and some more pessimistic than others.

I have indicated that, when I address issues in my budget, the issue of unemployment would be very high on the list of top priorities. I would invite my hon. friend to wait for the budget.

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TRADE

REQUEST THAT MINISTER TABLE DOCUMENTS DEALING WITH FOREIGN-OWNED BRANCH PLANTS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for International Trade. Yesterday I referred to some confidential documents that quoted senior Government officials and trade commissioners as saying that up to 75 per cent of the branch plants operating in Canada were prohibited from exporting by their foreign parents, thus losing a lot of jobs.

This morning I sent a note to the Minister's office asking that he make six specific documents public. I will send that

note to him again now. I have enclosed the titles of the documents, their dates, and the file numbers. Those documents include ones such as the Special Study on Export by Canadian Subsidiaries, which names companies that prohibit their branch plants from exports. There is also the main report on Exports by Canadian Subsidiaries—

Madam Speaker: Order. Does the Hon. Member have a question? This is Question Period.

Mr. Nystrom: The documents include the two to which I have referred. My question is very straightforward. Will the Minister table these documents so that the Canadian people will know what advice the Government has been receiving from its senior officials since the 1950s about the lack of export opportunities for branch plants of foreign multinational companies?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for sending me a copy of his note just now. I did not receive his note this morning because I was away from my office at meetings.

I note that he is asking for documents that are dated in four cases, April, 1963; in another case, 1961, and the other in 1958. I do not know if he is studying ancient history. These hardly seem current. I have to say to the Hon. Member, not having had notice of the nature of the documents until I came to the House, that I will make inquiries as to their status and whether they are eligible for release. If the Hon. Member already has them from some illicit source, I cannot see why he wants them released.

Mr. Nystrom: It is because the public deserves to know. Because of the mania for secrecy by the Government across the way, I am not allowed to release these documents without putting someone in jeopardy. That is why I asked the question.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF STUDIES

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, I will ask once again. Will the Minister make a commitment to make these documents public? Will he also make a commitment to make any studies that have been done since the 1960s, regarding the activities of foreign companies in this country, public as well? I suspect that the exact same practice is going on today that went on throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s and cost this country tens of thousands of jobs.

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, I know that there are many thousands of jobs in this country as a consequence of the exports of Canadian companies, including many that are foreign owned. I suggest that the Hon. Member is cognizant of the fact that the proper way for him to proceed for the production of papers is to seek an order for return. I suggest that he do so.