

Oral Questions

Individuals and community groups across the land have organized to provide many kinds of relief. The wide expression of concern indicates clearly that Canadians are prepared to share in the burden carried by those in other parts of the world.

What is now important is that we should not allow this outpouring of conscientious concern to dissipate with the solving of just one of the world's many problems. Our Canadian Government, through Parliament, should act to establish a national body to represent all Canadians and community groups willing to help those in other lands to resolve their problems, and mandate that national body to provide a vehicle for individuals and community groups to assist on a continuing basis.

Let's have national recognition of the fact that Canadians accept their international responsibilities.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE LEVELS—REQUEST THAT BUDGET BE INTRODUCED**

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In blatant contradiction to what the Minister stated yesterday, when he said that interest rates were falling and that unemployment rates were falling, we learned today that the prime lending rate has increased by 0.6 per cent and that the unemployment rate has increased by 0.4 per cent. It means that there are 167,000 more Canadians out of work now than there were last month.

In view of the staggering unemployment rate, is the Minister prepared to come forward with the Budget now? What the Minister said yesterday is not true. Canadians need a Budget, and they need it in March.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what I said yesterday, and I will say it again today, is that we cannot judge the performance of the Government's economic policy on a short-term basis—whether that be two weeks or one month. I would suggest that the Hon. Member should wait for the Budget. The Budget will come after we have had the opportunity to discuss with the First Ministers, next week in Regina, the ideas which they have on economic policy and which they feel should be reflected in our Budget; and also after the national economic conference. As soon as I can return to the House with a Budget, after the economic conference, I will present that Budget.

CHALLENGE '85—WAGE SUBSIDY COMPONENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, that is an obvious about-face by the Minister of Finance. I would like to direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In view of the fact that the youth unemployment rate is a staggering 17 per cent, can the Minister explain to the House why she has made wage subsidies the centre-piece of the employment strategy, when in fact she has evaluations within her own Department which suggest that they will not assist any of the depressed areas of Canada and that 60 per cent of the jobs would have been created anyway? Why is the Minister making wage subsidies the centre-piece of the employment strategy?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, wage subsidies are a major part of the summer employment program, because that is the way we will produce jobs for young people this summer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

UNEMPLOYMENT IN EASTERN CANADA

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Again, Mr. Speaker, the record will show very clearly an about-face by the Minister of Employment and Immigration from what she said in May of 1984.

Will the Minister kindly tell the House what she will do in terms of remedial measures for the high unemployment areas in Canada? Unemployment in eastern Canada has reached 23.2 per cent in Newfoundland, 15.6 per cent in New Brunswick, 13.9 per cent in Nova Scotia, and 14.2 per cent in P.E.I. What remedial measures will the Minister recommend to her Cabinet colleagues forthwith?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, clearly the Government and no Member of Parliament can take any comfort from the figures which were released this morning. We said from the outset that it would be a long, hard road. We said that last month when the figures were better, and we reiterate it now.

● (1120)

We have already put plans into place, Mr. Speaker. We have, for instance, introduced Investment Canada in order to bring investment to this country and to create more jobs.

Mr. Broadbent: Where is it?

Miss MacDonald: We have put into place economic development measures. My colleague, the Minister for DRIE, has reached agreements with provinces, particularly those which are hard pressed. This week I introduced a \$205 million program for students for the summer, and there are other programs. I would say that what we are particularly looking forward to is the First Ministers' conference and the measures which will be announced there.