

Oral Questions

I said in the House three weeks ago, on March 3, and I said it again on March 11 and in other circumstances even before this matter was raised, that the Government intended to take action at a given time, towards the end of the fiscal year.

I answered the third question from the Leader of the Opposition in the House, saying that I would officially take note of the Senator's letter and that we would try and act on it as soon as possible. And that is all.

● (1120)

SENATOR HÉBERT—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister for his gesture, and I hope that thanks to his intervention, perhaps at some time within the next few hours we will be able to put an end to the situation now existing in the Senate. I urge the Prime Minister to meet with Senator Hébert and to take him into his confidence.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to make this kind of humane gesture?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in a column by Alain Dubuc that appeared in yesterday's *La Presse*, there was a reference to Katimavik, and to show you how widely opinions differ, it said:

Katimavik: Symbol of defeat.

In the column, and this is not necessarily my opinion, here is what the observer says:

It took a heavy blow: their unemployment rate jumped to 18.8 per cent in 1982 and 19.9 per cent in 1983—

Generally speaking, with the catching up done in the last two years, the number of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who have jobs is higher—

—today—

—that in the seventies—

The process of deterioration was reversed in 1983 and 1984.

That is good news for Canadian youth, and I can assure my hon. friend that we are going to work harder to create permanent jobs for Canada's youth.

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[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—POSITION OF UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It concerns his visit to the United States. Six years ago President Carter acknowledged on behalf of his people that acid rain was a problem common to both countries and said that something ought to be done about it. Regrettably for those concerned about acid rain, he was out of office within a few months.

Five years ago President Reagan said in this House that there was a concern about the problems of the same pollution and committed himself to take action, but has done absolutely nothing in the past five years. Why should we now believe that President Reagan, a lame duck President, will do in the next few years what he completely failed to do in the past five years?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think you would find some people in disagreement with the notion that President Reagan is a lame duck. He was looking well and vigorous the last time I saw him, and he asked me to send his affectionate regards to the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

My hon. friend referred to the views expressed by President Carter and Prime Minister Trudeau. He is quite right. He also observed that President Carter was out of office a few months later. When we came into office we were called upon to deal with a new situation and some facts.

Notwithstanding the view expressed, when we looked over the five-year period there was no progress in tangible terms.

Second, we were called upon to deal with an American administration that expressed a view in regard to acid rain and the environment that was at deep variance with that held by the Government of Canada. So we began two things; first, cleaning up our own act here in Canada and, second, dealing with the United States to obtain two important views, hopefully, (a) that this problem was transboundary in creation and must be so dealt with, and (b), a comprehensive program to clean it up. That was the Drew Lewis-Bill Davis report, and I believe the wholehearted endorsement of that report by the President, undertaking to seek the funds, and my meetings with Congressional and Senatorial leaders to help ensure that those funds are available, represent substantial progress by Canada.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by complimenting the Government for its action here in Canada. I have said that before, and I repeat it. This Government has taken action on acid rain which was not taken by the previous Government. I compliment the Prime Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): My question pertains to what the Americans are or are not doing. Since the President of the United States said five years ago it was a common problem—that's not new—and since he said five years ago that something ought to be done and nothing has been done—and there is nothing new in that regard—and since the Prime Minister's own Minister of the Environment said: "What is good for the goose is good for the eagle", did the Prime Minister even ask President Reagan to make specific commitments to the reduction in levels of acid rain of the kind the