

Oral Questions

sure, appreciates that the only glimmer of hope on the economic horizon for many of Canada's citizens is the hope that in the promised economic statement from the Minister of Finance there will be a major reversal of governmental fiscal and monetary policy. Surely the minister has a very firm idea not only of what he will say but of when he will say it. What is the mystery? Can we not learn today what is in the minister's mind in respect of when we will have this much-needed economic statement from him?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am surprised, really, at the preamble to the question. The hon. member is advocating a complete reversal of current monetary and fiscal policy. I have never heard the official critic of his party advocate anything but a stiffening of fiscal policy rather than a loosening of it. I am surprised at this new evidence of a policy shift on the part of the Conservatives, but I can only reply to him in the same way as I replied to the former questions, namely, that I will be making a statement before the House rises for the summer recess. When the date is established, I will let the House know, and everyone will have ample opportunity to come and listen to the statement and hopefully approve of it.

ASSURANCE SOUGHT THAT HOUSE MAY DEBATE STATEMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. The Minister of Finance has indicated that the House of Commons would have the opportunity to listen. What the people of Canada expect is that this House of Commons will act, not simply listen. I want the minister to tell us whether the House of Commons will have the opportunity to consider specific new measures in his statement for several debating days, or for a reasonable number of debating days, after the statement is made in the House and before the summer recess?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, when the statement is made, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition will be entitled to ask that question. But I believe, if I answered the question either negatively or affirmatively, I would be prejudging what will be in the statement, and that has not yet been finally decided.

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, I am amazed that the Minister of Finance, having presided over this economic disaster, having tried to hide out in Versailles, and having now had the advantage of consultation with his cabinet and his caucus, does not know what in the world he will propose or whenever it is that he will propose it; indeed, he may not even know the date.

CONTENT OF STATEMENT—MINISTER'S INTENTION
RESPECTING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Finance whether in fact there will be specific new measures in the economic statement,

and whether the House of Commons will have the opportunity to discuss those measures, or is the minister intending simply to bring in a statement declaring nothing and then use closure to force Parliament out of here?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think the answer to the question is no.

POSSIBILITY OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also directed to the Minister of Finance. Surely he can tell us whether his economic statement will require legislative changes to be enacted by the House. Could he also tell us whether the statement will be given in the afternoon or in the evening?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I will reveal all these gripping details at the appropriate time.

• (1450)

QUERY RESPECTING STATEMENT'S CONTENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I want to be clear concerning what the Minister of Finance has said in response to me. I asked him whether there would be specific new measures. He said, "The answer is no". Is he telling us that there will be no specific new measures in the economic statement?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): As I heard the clinching, final part of the question, it concerned whether I would bring in nothing and close the House by closure, and I replied, "No."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, 1,200 Canadians a day are losing their jobs, businesses are going into bankruptcy day after day because of this government, but the Government of Canada refuses to tell the House of Commons of Canada whether there will be any new measures proposed. Will there be any new economic measures proposed in the economic statement? Will there be specific new proposals to rescue Canadians from the economic disaster into which this government has cast them?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think I have already answered that question. The statement will be made available in the House of Commons and the contents will be known then. I will not be able to specify, until the statement is made, what will be in it and what will be left out.

Mr. Lawrence: You do not know. Good grief!