

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HEALTH

INQUIRY RESPECTING POSSIBLE BUDGETING RESTRICTIONS ON SERVICES FOR ELDERLY IN PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

Mr. Jean-Guy Dubois (Lotbinière): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Considering the fact that the Minister's Department does a great deal for senior citizens and in view of the statement made in France by the Premier of Quebec, a statement that appeared in a magazine, *Le nouvel observateur*, and was broadcast on the Radio-Canada news, namely, that the next referendum would be won if more than 100,000 senior citizens were no longer with us, I should like to know whether the Minister of National Health and Welfare, in view of this sensational and disgraceful statement by the Premier of Quebec, could make some enquiries and provide statistics going back to 1980, to find out whether there have been budget cuts affecting staff and services in senior citizens' homes in Quebec.

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, if I am not mistaken, the Hon. Member is actually directing his question to the Premier of Quebec and making him pay for his past sins, because of that unfortunate remark concerning 100,000 senior citizens. These people who were already senior citizens three years ago would supposedly no longer be with us at the next referendum. Well, this means there will never be another referendum, since the Premier seems to have forgotten that the life expectancy of Quebecers at birth has increased steadily, and therefore these 100,000 senior citizens are going to haunt him for the rest of his days.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

INCREASE IN STUDENT UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Last night the Prime Minister agonized about how to handle prosperity while millions of unemployed Canadians were agonizing about how to buy food and pay the rent. I would like to ask the Prime Minister about unemployed students.

In the Kingston area there are 1,500 more students unemployed this month than last month, 1,000 more than were unemployed last year. What is happening in Kingston happens in every community across the country. Student unemployment is up 30 per cent this year. Since the Prime Minister was able to commandeer the airwaves to talk about 6 per cent and 5 per cent, why did he not use some of that time to talk about the enormous increase, the 30 per cent increase, in student unemployment, and to put forward proposals to alleviate that grave situation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, last fall I remember the Opposition complaining bitterly that I had "commandeered the airwaves", to use the Hon. Member's phrase, for three nights in a row. Now she is suggesting that last night my statement was not long enough and that I should take to the airwaves another time in order to deal with another problem.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I obviously could not in 15 minutes cover everything that the Government is doing and will want to do, including creating jobs for young people. More than \$1 billion this year is being spent in order to create jobs for young people. As I said last night, of 63,000 jobs created in May more than half of them are for young people, those under the age of 25. But I could not put everything in the same speech, Madam Speaker.

Mr. McGrath: How about making a speech in the House?

Mr. Trudeau: I will be happy to go to the CBC with the Hon. Member's suggestion that I have another couple of evenings so I can cover all these subjects too.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Had the Prime Minister utilized the television facilities of the House of Commons he would have been able to speak for much longer than that, and deal with some of the country's very critical issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: But obviously he wanted to ignore, and still wants to ignore—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I have again reminded Hon. Members today that they need not comment on answers but that they should simply ask a question. I would urge the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands to ask a question.

Miss MacDonald: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister about the 30 per cent increase in unemployment among young people. I am speaking about the students in this country who are without jobs, without unemployment insurance, without income, and who do not have the money to get back to school in the fall. The Prime Minister is jeopardizing their future. Does he consider that they are beneath the concern of the Government to deal with when he talks on national television, or will he put forward proposals that will meet this very grave situation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, how can the Hon. Member truthfully say that these young unemployed are "beneath" our concern, to quote her again.

Miss MacDonald: Don't you realize the increase?