

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I stated in my October statement that we firmly believe that the engine of growth in the Canadian economy is and has to be the private sector.

Mr. Stevens: When did you get that idea?

Mr. Lalonde: One cannot expect Governments, federal or provincial, to be the main instrument of growth in an economy like ours which is at best a mixed economy and which includes a very large private sector. This being said, government policy obviously and government spending have a significant role to play and they should not be ignored. It is not a matter of either/or, that is, leave it to the private sector or, on the other hand, as the socialists tend to think, it is all to be done by the Governments. Both have roles to play and the Government has to provide leadership in that respect, which we have provided and which we will continue to provide. So far as the specific measures are concerned, I invite my hon. friend to wait for the budget.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, socialists want jobs, and we do not see much leadership from the Government in creating jobs.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I want to direct this supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. After he made that statement in Toronto, a journalist interviewed some of the big employers. In an article in *The Toronto Star* under the headline, "Don't look to us for jobs most big employers say", it was reported that the President of The Bay saw no immediate plans for private hiring; the President of Alcan said the same thing, as did the President of Imperial Oil. The President of Canadian Pacific said that he was not expecting any major hiring before the end of the year.

In view of the fact that all of these major corporate presidents of some of the leading private companies in Canada have said, in effect, "Don't look to us in the immediate future to create jobs," why is the Government still sticking to the line that the main engine for creating jobs will be the private sector?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as a good socialist my hon. friend believes that the main way of creating jobs is probably to increase the number of bureaucrats.

Mr. Waddell: I am not the Government.

Mr. Lalonde: The Government does not happen to believe that adding to the number of bureaucrats is the correct solution to the unemployment problem.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: I remind my hon. friend that General Motors has just recalled 3,500 workers in Ontario.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: That is in Oshawa, in his own Leader's riding. At least he should phone his leader and ask him what is happening in Oshawa; it might be helpful.

As far as the general question that my hon. friend raises is concerned, I want to remind him that, as a good socialist, he should also know and understand that there is a small and medium-sized business sector in this country.

An Hon. Member: What are you doing?

Mr. Lalonde: The small and medium-sized business sector has been the main employer and the main source of job creation. This has been taking place under policies initiated by this Government, and I hope that it will continue over the next while and that my budget will contain measures that will indeed help medium and small businesses to play their full role in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE ADMINISTRATION

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES—REFUSAL OF COMMITTEE STUDY

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister who earlier in the Question Period refused a reference to an appropriate Committee of the House to study the ministerial conflict of interest guidelines on the basis of, to use his words, the political atmosphere.

By what right, convention or tradition is the Government now sitting in judgment on whether a committee should have a reference based on ministerial decision as to whether the political atmosphere is conducive to that Committee's study or not?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I assumed that the Hon. Member was interested in having an objective examination of a very important situation.

An Hon. Member: Absolutely.

Miss MacDonald: It will not be in the House.

Mr. MacEachen: All I am saying is that there has not been very much objectivity shown by the Opposition in this matter in the discussions we have had in the House; quite the contrary.

ROLE OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is part of a Government that ostensibly is interested in parliamentary reform, one of the tenets of which