

Oral Questions

referring to was the fact that the public has been under some misapprehension with regard to reduction in public expenditures. I might point out to the hon. gentleman that the rate of increase of expenditures for the financial year which will end next week will be below that of the gross national product and indeed below our anticipation for the year, and for the forthcoming year the rate of increase of expenditures will be half of what was earlier anticipated.

ECONOMIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF GOVERNOR OF
BANK OF CANADA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I too have a question concerning another well paid public servant. Can the Minister of Finance tell the House whether he has met recently with the governor of the Bank of Canada and, if so, did he make it clear to him that the government totally rejects both his foolish suggestion that 1976 was a good year economically for Canadians and his equally foolish view that we do not need a stimulus in the economy at this time to provide jobs for the more than one million unemployed Canadians?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): I have, of course, been in conversation this week with the governor of the Bank of Canada. The hon. gentleman finds himself in difficulty with the viewpoint he has been trying to sell to the Canadian public not according with that of the governor of the central bank. Between the two of them, I would have to take the governor's viewpoint.

POSSIBILITY OF TAX CUTS IN FORTHCOMING BUDGET

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Given the past performance of the governor, and indeed his predecessor, I would be very concerned if we had similar views. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, who did such a superb job in managing the economy in 1976, if he would confirm for the House a newspaper report that when he was visiting the U.S. he informed the U.S. secretary of the treasury that he would not be bringing forward any tax cuts in his forthcoming budget to stimulate the economy.

● (1420)

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker, I did not indicate to the secretary of the treasury the direction of our budget at all.

FORECAST OF UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR COMING YEAR

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Can the minister inform the House whether his department received the latest forecast of the Conference Board of Canada which projects an 8.3 per cent unemployment rate for Canada for the coming year, and if so, would he confirm whether his own departmental estimates coincide with that very rosy picture?

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada, which is representative of many major foreign multinationals operating in Canada, does present a rather gloomy viewpoint of the economy. As the hon. gentleman may have noticed, that particular viewpoint which apparently he espouses is not espoused by some of the other private concerns.

Mr. Broadbent: Name one.

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[Translation]

FISHERIES

MEASURES TO KEEP LARGE TRAWLERS OUT OF GULF OF ST.
LAWRENCE

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries.

Since fishing operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence will not begin before the end of April and that last year fishermen of the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands and northern New Brunswick faced serious problems caused by large trawlers from ports outside the gulf, could the minister tell the House what steps he has taken to ensure that the same conditions are not repeated so that fishermen will improve their catch and meet their needs?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, several members, especially the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works, the hon. member for the Îles-de-la-Madeleine and others, have made representations to that effect. We have banned large trawlers from the gulf, except in the northern reaches where cod stocks are satisfactory.

Finally, for trawlers which cannot go elsewhere we have reserved the stocks of the gulf which unfortunately are not so abundant as we would like, especially Atlantic redfish.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

MINISTER'S VIEW OF NEED FOR NATIONAL FOOD POLICY

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker—
Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Grafftey:—my question with regard to the need for a national food policy is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Responding to a question in this House on Friday the Minister of Finance said that this government sees a need for a new national food policy. Many weeks earlier the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said we do not have a national food policy, that we need one and that the government is studying it. On many occasions the Minister of Agriculture has said we need no new national food policy because we already have one. I would like to ask the Minister