

Oral Questions

● (1430)

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**PRESS COVERAGE OF PROPOSED FOREIGN TOUR OF PRIME MINISTER**

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. After his fiasco of a trip to Saudi Arabia where he humped through that country and after jetting to Europe for discussions there, the Prime Minister is now planning another junket to Latin America and Africa. He is using a Boeing 707 government jet refitted in what is termed a "comfortable configuration". He is limiting accommodation for the press and continuing the policy of restricting access to, and coverage of, himself on a trip which is made at public expense. What criteria, aside from favouritism, is the Prime Minister using in designating seats on this plane with respect to press coverage of his next trip?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, as to the use of the 707 and its comfortable configuration, my understanding is that it is exactly the same plane and the same configuration the hon. member's leader used when he flew to the Commonwealth meeting in Africa last year, so I see nothing exceptional about this. It is the plane which has been used by myself and was used by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition when he was prime minister.

As far as the press is concerned, my understanding is that the press can send who it wants to whatever events it wishes; but if members of the press want to come on this plane, their numbers will be limited and it will be up to them to choose who they want to send. The reason for this is that some of the countries we are going to—and went to on the last trip—have indicated that they would appreciate it if we did not come with 40 or 50 press people. We are trying to meet that courtesy but, of course, the press is always free to cover every one of my events which takes place publicly in any of the countries I am in.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, I think the question here is that of access to the Prime Minister on a trip paid for by the taxpayers of Canada. We have the substitution of "mousekeeters" in this country by a "junketeer" in the person of the Prime Minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lumley: You should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister is leaving our country to take these trips at a time when we are having a serious constitutional debate, when unemployment is reaching unprecedented levels—

Mr. MacEachen: It is decreasing.

Mr. Hnatyshyn:—and energy policies are causing great division and collapsing activity in our country. The Prime Minister approved the expenditure of in excess of \$60 million for advertising and manipulation of public opinion in this

country. Can he not see his way clear to dedicate part of this money to ensure that there is free coverage by the press and not just coverage by what I might term the sycophants of the Prime Minister?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I am sorry to see the hon. member now joining the Leader of the New Democratic Party in describing as junketeering a trip which intends to show Canada's concern for the some billion human beings in this world who are very poor, who go to bed hungry every night and who do not have enough money to live in proper sanitary conditions. If the hon. member is condemning this approach by this government to try to help the plight of the Third World, he can form an alliance with the Leader of the New Democratic Party and let the public judge his position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: You are doing it in secret.

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THE BUDGET**PROJECTIONS RESPECTING UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION—
GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. It concerns the discrepancy between the projections contained in the budget and the so-called medium-term document which was released at the time of the budget and the figures which are now developing with respect to the state of the Canadian economy. I remind the minister that on page 25 of his budget speech he said, and I quote:

The fiscal projections are based on the medium-term economic projections described in a companion budget paper.

If we look at the unemployment figures which are being compiled for the year 1980, we see that it will be necessary to have a figure of under 6 per cent in December in order for us to meet the figures which are projected in the budget by the minister on a year-over-year basis. We can see the number of conflicts in the figures with regard to food prices which have now been released and projected for the next year. Most estimates, apart from those of the Department of Finance, show rates as high as 14 per cent or 15 per cent from the Bank of Commerce and 16 per cent from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

If it can be established—and I suggest it can—that the projections in the budget both with respect to unemployment next year and to inflation next year are shown to be entirely off base and do not reflect what is really going on in the economy, does the minister not think that it is time for the government to re-think its economic policy to take into account what is clearly a worsening situation?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have no difficulty in acknowledging to the hon. member that these projections are