

Oral Questions

I agree with my hon. friend, obviously, that any degree of poverty in an industrialized country is too much.

The object of the exercise of all government policy should be to remove people from the situation of poverty and to give them the opportunity to work their way into greater prosperity, which is why changes are proposed for \$800 million more for training under the Unemployment Insurance Act. If my hon. friend wanted to be helpful, she could prevail upon her Liberal friends in the Senate to pass that piece of legislation as quickly as possible. That would help people get out of poverty.

I indicated that while not perfect, under this government 757,000 fewer people are in poverty than in 1984. I did not out of politeness point out that under her government 734,000 people between 1980 and 1984 fell into poverty.

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TRANSPORT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Finance.

In its insatiable appetite for imposing yet new taxes, it is now reported that this government wants to impose, of all things, tolls on highways to squeeze out another \$13 billion from Canadian taxpayers.

Can the minister stand in his place here and now, put and end to this and tell us that there will not be such a thing as highway tolls in Canada?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that the majority of the responsibility for highway financing rests in the hands of the provincial governments.

• (1140)

The hon. member should also be fully aware that just last week the federal government removed the last federal toll on the Champlain Bridge in Montreal.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKnight: Anyone who is suggesting that the federal government would either have the ability or the desire to impose tolls is not recognizing reality.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I do not think the minister should be saying that about the Assistant Deputy Minister in charge of transport.

[Translation]

My supplementary is for the minister who answers on behalf of the Minister of Transport or the President of the Treasury Board.

Last December, in announcing these cuts, the President of the Treasury Board said that the government would disclose in the future other ways of collecting revenues and charging fees.

Will the Minister tell us now if what we are seeing today is just another way of digging into the pockets of Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): No, Madam Speaker. I must say to my hon. colleague that, as the Minister of National Defence mentioned, we recently decided to remove the tollbooth on the Champlain Bridge.

I did not read the article that my friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) is referring to—I will do it later—but I can tell him we have no such plan.

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[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Madam Speaker, 90 per cent of American toxic waste is imported to Canada. CBC television has informed us that the Prime Minister's ambassador to the United States has actively lobbied against an American control bill on toxic waste, essentially to loosen the standards so that we in Canada can get as much toxic waste from the United States as possible.

When we are fighting acid rain emissions coming into Canada, and we have fought somewhat successfully, how can the Prime Minister's government reject the charge that it is not the utmost in hypocrisy to be asking at the same time for as much toxic waste from the United States as we can get?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Madam Speaker, there has been over time a flow of waste materials, including toxic waste, both ways across the Canada-U.S. border.