

Presence in Gallery

provincial meetings if they are productive, and the best way to see if they can be productive will be for the federal Minister of Finance to meet with his counterparts to see what suggestions they have for co-ordinated or other forms of action in order to help revive the economy.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONVENING CONFERENCE

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, with all due respect to the Prime Minister, surely if the meeting which is taking place on Thursday is a success, then, presumably, the implication of what the Prime Minister is saying is that there will be a First Ministers' conference. But even if it is not a success, I would like to suggest to the Prime Minister it is all the more reason for the Prime Minister of Canada to show some leadership and call the First Ministers together to give some collective leadership to Canada in this very serious economic situation. Therefore, I would like to ask him a straight question, not a rhetorical one. Would he not agree that, even if the meeting which takes place on Thursday is not successful, it is essential to get a co-ordinated effort at the national level, involving the Provinces and the federal Government, and, therefore, he should exercise his responsibility and request that the Premiers come and meet in Ottawa, or elsewhere, to deal with the very serious problem of unemployment?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I will speak my mind quite clearly on this. I think that a meeting which would be wildly unsuccessful and would break down as did the February meeting of last year, when there was total disagreement and practically chaos in the so-called collective approach of all First Ministers, would be counter productive. I would rather have no meeting if it appears from the meeting of the Finance Ministers that there is not some possibility of reaching a form of agreement, and if the signs seem to emerge from that meeting that the Premiers will use the next meeting as they did the February one, to make ten speeches on television blaming the federal Government for all the evils of the nation.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY OF MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF SWAZILAND

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of the Hon. Canon S. D. Dlamini, Minister of Education of Swaziland.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL AND OF FRENCH PARLIAMENTARIANS

Madam Speaker: I also have the honour of drawing the attention of the House to the distinguished presence in our gallery of Mr. Phillipe Deshormes, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: And of a delegation of French parliamentarians headed by Mr. Bernard Derosier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[English]

CROWN CORPORATIONS

FRAMEWORK FOR ACCOUNTABILITY—AUDITOR GENERAL'S COMMENTS

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, in his response to my Leader, the Prime Minister talked about what the Auditor General did not say about Crown corporations in his report. What the Auditor General did say was that of 33 key criteria which should be included in an omnibus Crown corporations' policy, the Government's Bill C-123 fails to meet some 26 of those criteria. I would like to ask the Prime Minister, will he now give the House the assurance that no new Crown corporations will be created, including Canagrex, until the Government has in place a comprehensive framework for the accountability of Crown corporations which meets most of the key objections of the Auditor General?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, we do have such a comprehensive framework. I believe it is before the House now in Bill C-123, and Part V of that Bill indicates that comprehensive framework which we see as appropriate for ensuring that Parliament has all the pertinent and relevant information regarding the operation and control of Crown corporations, and that the Government maintains the ultimate responsibility for acting on behalf of the shareholders. This is the spirit of Bill C-123. We hope that the Opposition will co-operate to bring it before the House as soon as possible so that we can hear their views on this and, hopefully, improve it and study any amendments they might want to bring in which would improve the control and administration of Crown corporations.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: If not, bring in closure.

REQUEST THAT BILL C-123 BE SCRAPPED

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Possibly the Prime Minister did not hear the question or he did not read