

I would also remind the hon. member that in the last three months this government has brought forward a number of decisions that will stimulate the economy—the fighter aircraft decision, major investments in DREE programs, major investments to support Chrysler—all of which are designed to provide a stimulus for jobs across Canada in terms of long-term economic development. If you add all those up, we are probably investing in this country to the extent that our fiscal limits will allow.

● (1425)

Mr. Hawkes: There appears to be a contradiction between that statement and the statement of the Minister of Finance. If the Minister of Employment and Immigration is suggesting that \$237 million out of the \$2 billion is allocated toward job creation, I do not think we shall find it in the figures which were presented to us.

The labour force data released today suggests that in the past month this country has lost 68,000 jobs, on a seasonally adjusted basis; that is, 3,400 jobs lost each working day. Can the minister tell us whether, in his view, that loss is temporary or long-term and likely to accelerate?

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that the contradiction is surely in the eyes of the beholder. In this case there is no difference whatsoever between myself and the Minister of Finance. What the Minister of Finance has just said is that we, like most economies, are influenced by a number of factors.

Certainly, there is the international factor—the softening in the U.S. market and the severe recession which the U.S. economy is now experiencing. So in terms of giving an answer, it depends partly on decisions made elsewhere, outside the borders of this country. But I can assure the hon. member that we will do everything we can to soften the impact and respond with a great deal of care and concern.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT—PROGRAMS TO ALLEVIATE

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): I have a question for the Minister of Finance. The unemployment figures released today show that over 900,000 people are unemployed. The seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment is up in every region. Also, in the heartland of the Canadian manufacturing industry, Ontario, unemployment is up sharply, to a large extent because 30,000 auto workers and workers in related industries such as rubber, plastics and glass are unemployed and are not likely to resume employment, if ever, until 1981 or 1982.

Given these facts, can the minister tell us whether the government is considering new programs which will put a large proportion of our unacceptably high number of unemployed to work? Or are we to assume that the government has decided

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that these people will just have to live as best they can until the international economic situation improves?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): No, Madam Speaker, I think that would be an unduly pessimistic attitude to take. The hon. member referred to the particular position of the auto industry. It seems to me that general demand policies would not have very much of an effect on improving the sales of automobile manufacturers. It is the kind of program announced by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, namely, to permit companies like Chrysler to adjust to market conditions, which has the best chance of providing employment opportunities. That is the type of program we ought to be seeking in the present situation.

Mr. Orlikow: It seems to me highly unlikely that 900,000 unemployed are going to be in the market for cars, refrigerators, houses or anything else. Despite all the speeches about helping women to get jobs, or better jobs, figures today indicate that 400,000 women are looking for work. That is virtually 40 per cent of the work force. Does the government have any plans to ensure that more women will be able to find jobs in the coming year?

Mr. MacEachen: I think I should clarify my earlier answer to the hon. member so that he would realize that when I talked about the automobile industry, I had in mind those persons in that industry who are suffering from unemployment and whose only hope for future employment comes, not from general demand policies, but from structural readjustment within the industry itself so that the market opportunities for the product would be better.

As the hon. member knows, there are certain automobile manufacturers abroad who are competing very vigorously in the North American market because they have products which consumers want. That is the point I had in mind with respect to these unemployed.

● (1430)

Mr. Broadbent: What about the second part?

[*Editor's Note: At this point Mr. Trudeau entered the chamber.*]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Orlikow: Madam Speaker, to say the least, I am dismayed at what I consider to be a very cold and callous reply from the Minister of Finance, who himself comes from an area which has a large number of unemployed, to a very serious problem.

I would like to ask the minister a very specific question. Almost 50 per cent of the unemployed are young people under 24, and of those more than 400,000, 95,000 are students who are looking for work for the summer. They not only have difficulty finding jobs, but also in the calculations which the provinces make with respect to student aid it is assumed that 45 per cent of their needs will be met by income they earn