

Oral Questions

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I am not sure of the relevance of the first part of the question as it was asked. The main estimates will be before committee and the right hon. gentleman will have ample opportunity to question the ministers in charge of those departments in the areas he has raised.

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, I can inform the minister, who should have known, that the combined cost of those three moves will be in excess of \$50 million. The question I should now like to pose to the minister is whether the Government of Canada is considering moving other federal facilities to ridings held by Liberal ministers. If so, will he tell the House which facilities are intended to be moved, and at what cost?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, perhaps the right hon. gentleman would give us the answer to that question as well. I presume that the right hon. gentleman is referring to a program of decentralization which was a program of the previous Liberal administration, and has been confirmed where it is cost-effective and in keeping with the over-all efficient management of government resources.

Mr. Clark: What I am speaking of, Madam Speaker, is a program of Liberal patronage that so far has cost the taxpayers of Canada \$50 million.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I want to know from the president of the pork-barrel; given a situation of high unemployment in this country, coupled with recent lay-offs at Sysco and with serious unemployment in the auto industry, will he assure the House that this practice of patronage—which has been evident with regard to Parks Canada, Eldorado and the movement of the DVA site within Charlottetown—by the Liberal Party of Canada will stop now and that, instead, priority will be given to helping people who are out of work in Sysco, helping people out of work in the auto industry and helping to get on with DREE projects across the country?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, in response to this charge of patronage, I would point out that one of the most significant announcements in recent weeks concerns the Vancouver trade centre. I am not aware that a Liberal represents that riding.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

LOCATION OF NEW ELDORADO NUCLEAR PLANT

Hon. George Hees (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Ontario economic region No. 52, the area in which until recently it was planned to build a new Eldorado plant in southern Ontario, has an unemployment rate of 10.5 per cent, second only, in Ontario, to the Windsor area with 12.3 per cent which the federal government has just recently greatly assisted by bailing out the Chrysler Corporation.

● (1420)

Would the Prime Minister and his government now give serious reconsideration to moving this plant from an area with such high unemployment which desperately needs the jobs which the building of this new plant would provide?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, of course, the unemployment rate in the hon. member's section of Ontario is one of concern to the government. He will recall that the Minister of Energy did comment on action taken in that area by local people, with the co-operation of the federal government, and said we would consider it. But the hon. member, in his fairness, would also realize that it does make sense to process natural resources in that part of the country where they are produced, when that is possible; and that northern Ontario particularly is a part of Ontario that needs to be developed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I think it is obvious that the economic arguments that have been attempted to be put up by the Prime Minister simply do not hold water. He knows that perfectly well. It is obvious that the answers given recently to the question—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question should be more obvious.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: We agree, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: Madam Speaker, from the answer that was just given to me and to the Leader of the Opposition, is it not obvious that with this Prime Minister and with this government the pork-barrel takes precedence over people?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I want to point out that my argument was not only economic, it had to do with the whole philosophy of this government, that is, to help develop regions which are less developed. The hon. member knows that in Ontario most of the northerners feel they have not been given an opportunity to develop equal to that of people living along the Montreal-Toronto axis. It is on that basis that we took our decision.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: Madam Speaker, would the Prime Minister not agree that an area that has the second highest unemployment rate in Ontario—the one I have just mentioned—deserves more attention at this time than any other region except the greater Windsor area?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I said in my first answer that, of course, an area where unemployment is high is the object of government policy such as Canada Works which attempts to bring employment to these various areas. But as a