

Oral Questions

the Minister of Transport said, as reported at page 26853 of *Hansard*:

—it would be normal for Mr. Pitfield in his former capacity to write to me or to other Ministers expressing his views or the views of the Prime Minister on matters of this kind.

Did the Prime Minister discuss with Mr. Pitfield the development of the McGill College Avenue area before Mr. Pitfield wrote to the Minister of Transport?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I did discuss with Mr. Pitfield the fact that Air Canada was thinking of building or purchasing new quarters in Montreal. I did indicate to Mr. Pitfield that I would want to make sure that that decision was not purely a corporate decision taken for the convenience of Air Canada but that the Minister of Transport was brought into this discussion so that the Government's input could be made known.

● (1440)

ROLE OF AIR CANADA CHAIRMAN

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the the Prime Minister. Can he tell the House that, in view of his concern, the Minister of Transport perhaps was not involved in some of these matters, and that his interest was stimulated by the Chairman of Air Canada, Mr. Amyot, in representations which the Chairman made to the Prime Minister or to Mr. Pitfield?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, my interest was essentially to make sure that Air Canada would make a decision which was good for the unemployment situation in Montreal—

Mr. Wilson: Come on, Pierre.

Mr. Trudeau: —that they would be looking, as the Government is, for hopes of an economic renewal in that city, and that any decision made by a major Crown corporation, like Air Canada, would be in some way compatible with such economic recovery.

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INDUSTRY AND LABOUR ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

CRITERIA GOVERNING PROGRAM IN PORT ALBERNI, B.C.

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Last December the Government announced an Industry and Labour Adjustment Program to the tune of about \$15 million for Port Alberni, which was experiencing 25 per cent unemployment. In the six months that program has been in place only 133 temporary jobs have been created, paying \$175 a week. With regard to that program, which is basically set up to deal with central Canadian manufacturing industry, will the Minister review the criteria for the program so it

would more aptly apply to a primary resource industry in Port Alberni, such as forestry, fishing and tourism, so that jobs can be created from the \$15 million promised for the workers of Port Alberni?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member will be pleased to know that I have just received a report from members of my advisory council whom I had asked to do an examination of the labour adjustment programs that we have established. Mr. Emile Vallee, who is a member of the CLC and also a member of that council, visited Port Alberni, has just given me a report recommending certain changes. He pointed out that the difficulty with the program is that we tried to deliver it through the auspices of the local community where we brought together community leaders, municipal authorities, and officials. Under that program we are trying to work up a system where local people would be the primary sponsors of new programs. He has recommended it to me. I hope to be able to visit Port Alberni this summer to go over those recommendations presented by the advisory council. After those recommendations are implemented, I am sure the program will achieve the objectives we established for it.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF QUALIFYING PERIOD

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Madam Speaker, with regard to the Minister's answer, I might add that the established criterion for ILAP is a one-year period. In Port Alberni we still have 2,400 people on unemployment insurance, 2,000 people on social assistance, and 1,400 people who have only part-time work. Could I have some assurance from the Minister that the period for qualification for those funds can be extended past the one-year period, considering the utter failure of the program up to this point?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, if I might be permitted I would like to suggest to the Hon. Member that he examine very closely the kind of program proposals contained in the legislation that has just been passed by this House under the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion which do set out a number of special programs by which communities like Port Alberni can develop special assistance programs for industrial development. In the meantime, the labour adjustment part of ILAP will be continuing to provide for the ability of workers in communities such as Port Alberni, to maintain and develop new job alternatives, retraining programs and others.

It is with the new program, under the new industrial regional development system that has been established by the passage of the Bill, that I think we will be able to provide particularly effective targeting assistance for communities that have gone through the kind of difficulties that Port Alberni has experienced.