

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Leader surprises me with her question. She talks about gloom and worry in the land, while the International Monetary Fund has just said that this year and next, Canada will lead the world in economic growth and in job creation and have the lowest inflation of all industrialized countries. That is encouraging. I see that the New Democrats' leader has trouble taking good news, but that is very good news for job creation and for the whole country.

[English]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Like many Canadians I would like to hear good news, but we cannot ignore the fact that even when it is not in the headlines the rate of unemployment in this country is for most Canadians not just a recession but a depression.

I would cite for the Prime Minister several examples of the desperation that people are feeling in this country. Just last week 290 people applied for one single job at \$6.50 an hour in Kingston. In another town in Ontario, Napanee, 2,700 people applied for 130 jobs. In Quebec it is reported that some 34,000 people applied for 135 jobs with the provincial auto insurance program there.

I want to ask the Prime Minister when this government is going to abandon its policy of creating unemployment and invest in the Canadian people so that we can become the competitive country he speaks about so often and get Canada back working.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have to tell my hon. friend, with respect, that her question perplexes me no less in English than it does in French.

In point of fact, the reports published by the IMF world economic outlook indicate that Canada is going to lead the industrialized world this year and next in economic growth, in employment growth and in low

inflation. We will have the lowest inflation in the industrialized world.

The combination of these factors indicate that the fundamentals are in place for what we hope will be an impressive and durable economic recovery.

My hon. friend from the Liberal Party says: "What about employment?" He is quite right. Even though we are encouraged by the fact that employment growth in Canada will be 1.8 per cent next year and 3.1 per cent in 1993, namely the best in the world, the fact of the matter is that there are too many unemployed in Canada today.

When this government was sworn in, taking over from the Liberals, unemployment was 11.7 per cent. We reduced it to 7.3 per cent and it is back up to 10.3 per cent. That is what we must concentrate on very vigorously.

I think my hon. friend would be encouraged by the fact that all of the fundamentals are in place that will inspire job creation, thereby lowering the unemployment rate. Surely, even with this difficulty, the hon. leader of the NDP should be ready to stand up and acknowledge this. When the rest of the world is saying that Canada is number one, why does the leader of the NDP not take some pleasure in it as well?

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Prime Minister start listening to Canadians. Certainly the Prime Minister will have to admit that out of the G-7 countries, Canada has the highest unemployment and that is a tragedy for Canada and for Canadians.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that he has no intention of changing the economic direction of this government. I say to the Prime Minister then that the country will ask for that direction change. He should call an election and let the people of Canada make their comment on this government's economic policies.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am ready to accede to a lot of requests of my hon. friend, but that is not one of them.

I share the fact that she is less than pleased in regard to the employment situation. On the one hand we are encouraged by the rapid rate of growth in employment foreseen for 1993, but we are concerned by the high rate of unemployment. It is a structural problem that successive governments have had serious difficulty with. The