

Oral Questions

that, unless the Bill in question, and I refer to the Bill pertaining to the pensions of retired federal civil servants, is passed through all stages and becomes the law of Canada, the Government will adhere to existing law? That is to say, until that event occurs, will the Government maintain the law and provide the pension increase under existing law to which those retired civil servants are entitled?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, it is certainly our intention to respect the rule of law, and our intention not to send out cheques involving amounts in the area recommended in Bill C-133 until that Bill has been passed into law. I would suggest to my hon. friends that they do everything possible to co-operate in allowing the House to make a final decision on the Bill so the concern he is attempting to develop will be, as I said before, totally hypothetical.

● (1430)

Mr. Broadbent: I want the Minister to know that Members of this Party are opposed to all three Bills and we will debate them in terms of all the time that is required.

REQUEST THAT INDEXING OF PENSIONS RESPECT RULE OF LAW

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): My final question is for the Minister of Justice. Will he give some assurance to Parliament and, more important, to the people of Canada, that the Parliament of Canada, as represented by the Cabinet, will maintain the principle of the rule of law? Will he, as Minister of Justice, assure the House that increases for family allowances and retired federal civil service pensioners will be increased next month according to existing law? Will he give us that assurance?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, I would like to assure the hon. gentleman that any advice that I give to Cabinet will respect the rule of law.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR JOB CREATION

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. It appears from the Minister's response to questions that I put to him last week, as well as from other statements arising from the provincial Finance Ministers' meeting, that any announcement of federal Government action to create new jobs will take place after a budget next year which is expected some time in late February or March. Why is the Minister delaying any action on job creation until half way through what will undoubtedly be the worst winter of unemployment since 1933?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I would remind my hon. friend that the Government has put forward several billions of dollars in projects involving jobs, some of which are direct job creation, and some for job

creation by the private sector. Some of those jobs will result from the implementation of Bills that are currently before the House—

Mr. Siddon: Where did the jobs go in the first place?

Mr. Lalonde:—in particular from the Income Tax Act that the Opposition has refused to debate up until now. The Opposition has dragged its feet and has let the bells ring rather than debate this Bill so that Canadian taxpayers will get their refunds and the companies will get their benefits.

I suggest to my hon. friend that, before asking for more, he should at least let Parliament decide on what has already been announced and is awaiting Parliamentary approval.

Mr. Wilson: The Minister of Finance knows full well that we have not refused to debate that Income Tax Act. If he or his predecessor had brought that Bill forward when it should have been brought forward in June, July, or September or October this year, it would have been passed by now. He also knows that that Bill will reduce the number of jobs in this country instead of increasing them.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL MEETING OF FINANCE MINISTERS

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, it is clear that the Minister is opting for more high visibility programs which make it appear that jobs are being created, rather than looking to the economic benefit of acting now to create jobs that are desperately needed today. Since there is no definite date for another meeting of provincial Finance Ministers, and since this meeting, if called, will not take place until some time in February, will the Minister today show some concern for those who are without a job and set a specific date for the next Finance Minister's meeting with the Provinces so that he can put forward a direct action plan to create jobs?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I would just remind my hon. friend that, at the time we were supposed to debate the Income Tax Act, the Official Opposition decided to resort to the childish game of hiding behind the curtains rather than being in the House—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde:—to debate the legislation. They decided to waste time by letting the bells ring again. It is up to them to decide whether they want to do it or not, but they should have the honesty to recognize what actually happened in the House when the Official Opposition refused to assume its responsibility and debate the legislation that is before the House.

As far as the programs are concerned, I indicated in my October 27 statement that \$1.1 billion of expenditure will have a considerable job creation impact. Out of this expenditure there is a special program called NEED, to which we have allocated \$500 million and with which the Provinces have co-operated so that we will have more than \$700 million allocated to this very Program and its funds will begin to be expended in the course of this winter.