

Oral Questions

Prime Minister but as the Acting Prime Minister. There is a great difference between the two.

On behalf of the Prime Minister I am pleased to announce that the Secretary of State who, since 1981 and up until now, had been co-ordinator in this area, will now be the Minister responsible for the status of disabled persons with a mandate to be responsive and to proselytize for their concerns and their needs, both in Government and outside of Government. I am very, very pleased to be the one to announce this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepin: I would like to say two other things if I may, Madam Speaker. I would like to observe the presence in the gallery today of representatives of the handicapped community, and I pay homage to them and to their courage.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepin: I would also like to pay tribute to the Special Committee of the House of Commons on the Disabled and Handicapped people. This was of course an all-Party committee. Their report, entitled "Obstacles", has become a classic. I understand the Committee is coming to retirement this year and I would like to pay my respects to all of the Members of the Committee and particularly to the distinguished chairman.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Government for taking a half step forward.

REQUEST THAT PERMANENT COMMITTEE BE APPOINTED

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I think it was recommended that there be a separate appointment of a Minister of State responsible for handicapped persons. If I understand correctly, the Minister answered my question by saying that this will be an added responsibility for the current Secretary of State. If I am confused about that, I hope the Minister will straighten me out.

Second, I would like to follow up on the Minister's praise for the Special Committee and ask him whether or not it is the Government's intention to turn that Special Committee into a permanent standing committee of the House. We on this side of the House would support such an initiative with a great deal of enthusiasm, and I hope there will be a positive response to that request.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend is right. The Secretary of State will add to his responsibilities the one I have indicated, but that is quite normal. The Minister of State for Mines is also responsible for the status of women and, as we all know, she does that job extremely well. The Secretary of State will do likewise.

With respect to half measures, I do not think that this is worth underlining because I do not think it is a fair measure. This afternoon the Secretary of State will table the third report which will indicate once again, as the two previous reports did, the dedication and commitment of the Government to that objective. Third, I do not know and in fact I

doubt if there is any intention of converting the committee to a permanent one.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF ASSISTANT MAYOR OF SAINT-MALO,
MR. ALBERT-YVES SAËR

Madam Speaker: The House is aware that next year, we shall be celebrating the 450th anniversary of the first voyage to Canada by the explorer Jacques Cartier, when he took possession of New France on behalf of King Francis I. I am very pleased to draw the attention of the House to the distinguished presence in our gallery of the Assistant Mayor of Saint-Malo, Mr. Albert-Yves Saër, who is in charge of organizing the festivities in that city.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT RESTRAINT PROGRAM ON
UNEMPLOYED

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance in anticipation of the Prime Minister's televised statement on the economy tonight.

The Minister might be aware that Bishop Proulx and the Catholic Bishops have said that in our present economic system people are organized to serve the economy rather than the economy serving the people. Would the Minister agree that the six and five program has not led to full employment, and that that is the real failure of the six and five program?

Would the Minister tell Members of the House what we are to say to the 22-year old Canadian who will never find a job, to the middle-aged Canadian woman who has been laid off because of technological change, and finally, to the labourer and carpenter who are working three months out of 12? In other words, what are we to say to the unemployed in Canada, and what does the Government intend to do, aside from the six and five program?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the New Democratic Party is again showing that it has practically no solutions to offer. They do not even have enough imagination to assume there is a sensible answer to the question they are asking. First of all, I would like to make it clear to the Hon. Member that the purpose of the 6 and 5 program was not to create full employment at a moment's notice. The program was aimed at reducing inflation, the result being that