

Oral Questions

INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, it is perhaps not surprising that a Prime Minister who shows no concern about Canadians facing bankruptcy, Canadians facing loss of jobs, Canadians forced to leave their homes, that he, the millionaire from Outremont, sits there and smiles while Canadians lose their homes.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: It is perhaps not surprising that he should show a similar contempt for the House of Commons. Let me ask him a question about the priorities of his government. Why does his government believe that it was justified in spending an extra \$15 million last year on government advertising and propaganda when it will do nothing to help Canadians facing bankruptcy, foreclosure, and a loss of their homes, jobs and businesses?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jim Fleming (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Madam Speaker, I am not sure that the right hon. member's figure of \$15 million difference is correct. The figures for when his government was in power are not available because there was an offshore private sector company that both assigned the agencies and assigned the time and space placement. Nor do we have from previous governments accurate figures for the totals. In any case, I make no apology, and I am sure my colleagues do not, for trying to relate better to Canadians the programs of the Government of Canada. If we have a crisis in this country it is that Canadians do not well enough understand the role of their national government, and all that people on that side of the House want to do is tear it apart.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

TIMING OF PROGRAMS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, one role of the national government that Canadians very well understand is that when Canadians are forced into bankruptcy by federal policy, forced to leave their homes by federal policy, forced to shut down businesses which cost jobs by federal policy, they have a right to some response from the national government of Canada. We would like the Prime Minister of Canada to stand in his place, not jerk his thumb at his various ministers, and tell this House of Commons when the Government of Canada intends to introduce programs that will help Canadians being forced into bankruptcy by the Trudeau government policies, when measures will be introduced in this House to help Canadians who are forced to surrender their houses because of the policies forced by this government, and when an equal priority will be given to the needs of the people of Canada as the government gives to its own propaganda.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I accept humbly the lecture from the Leader of the Opposition. He should be concerned with another type of bankruptcy, that is the moral bankruptcy he has shown in this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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HOUSING

QUERY RESPECTING AHOP PROGRAM

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the minister responsible for housing I wish to direct my question to the Prime Minister. Yesterday the government of Nova Scotia moved to assist AHOP home owners suffering under the double burden of more stringent income criteria and high mortgage interest rates, and among other things fixed the mortgage interest rate of 14 per cent. The Nova Scotia housing minister stated that he made two special trips to Ottawa to seek federal government help, but was refused. Since the federal government created the AHOP program, why is it bailing out of its responsibility at this time?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I have no recollection of ever getting support for that program from the hon. member or his party. Now he is saying we should do more of it. I will refer him to the hon. member for St. John's West who is always complaining that we should be keeping the deficit down and be spending less money. I wish they would meet together and get their policies on the same line.

Mr. Lewis: Surely once a program is committed you have to follow through on it.

ASSISTANCE TO LANDLORDS

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): The government recently moved to assist apartment owners who participated in the assisted rental program by increasing the maximum subsidy per unit from \$120 a month to \$180 a month. The reason given for the increase was that landlords are faced with an increase of 6 per cent or 7 per cent in mortgage interest rates. Why is the government moving to help landlords faced with bankruptcy, and refusing to help home owners faced with the same problem?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I indicated earlier that the representations that the minister had made to the banks applied to people who were in difficulties, such as bankruptcies, whether they be in one category or another.