

Adjournment Debate

Epp) did make a few suggestions that would bear closer scrutiny to see if they would not be acceptable to the government.

In Canada today, jobs remain unfilled because many job seekers do not have the required qualifications. The hon. member very correctly pointed out that the bill now before the House which, I believe, will be quickly passed by both opposition parties and the government side, may provide some solutions to the problem.

Every year, we are spending about \$700 million to help young Canadians. Without government programs, youth unemployment would be even worse, but there are still limits to the amount of money that federal and provincial governments can spend. This week, the minister wrote to 1,400 employers across Canada, asking them to co-operate with the federal government and the provinces in finding job opportunities for students. He also wrote to all his cabinet colleagues and to all the members of this House, asking them to do what they can be hire young people. Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to add that unlike what is being done by some provincial governments, the federal government has this year increased funds earmarked for summer employment to \$120 million, which will, of course, provide jobs for many young people across this country.

● (2210)

[English]

ENERGY—SERVICE STATION COST OF GASOLINE. (B) REQUEST THAT PRICE BE REDUCED

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, just listening to the parliamentary secretary, I am reminded of the fact that some seven hon. members of this House of Commons spent 14 months of their lives on a special committee on Employment Opportunities for the 80s. Much of that report was dedicated to young people, but not one single recommendation from that all-party committee was adopted by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) in his last budget, and the tragedy of unemployment in this country continues.

The question which I asked of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in the month of March, which was not answered satisfactorily, relates to that issue of unemployment. In Canada in the last two years we have had in place a system whereby all oil and gas which comes through the refinery gate is taxed. The money is collected and it is spent in subsidizing foreign oil. Late last winter and this spring, those subsidies have been such that oil from Mexico, which really costs \$9 a barrel more than equivalent Canadian oil for the same level of crude, ends up to be \$9 a barrel cheaper than equivalent Canadian because Canadian taxpayers are taxed and importers are given a subsidy of \$18 a barrel. In percentage terms, we have subsidized that oil to the point at which it is 40 per cent cheaper than the equivalent Canadian crude.

We should not be surprised as a nation to find that refiners choose to purchase the imported oil. When that happens, Canadian oil stays in the ground, jobs are lost, money goes out

of the country, consumers end up paying more, there are fewer people employed and more people are on unemployment insurance. Surely that is a policy which defies common sense and logic. If people have trouble understanding that, let me refer to the fact that a number of people from the shoe industry will be in Ottawa tomorrow. If the federal government, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde), the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance proposed to those people from the shoe industry that there should be a tax on all shoes sold in Canada, that moneys should go into a pot and we should then take that money and subsidize those who import shoes from other nations, I think we would have a riot. I think people would be petitioning on the front steps. The Members of Parliament who represent areas where there are shoe factories would be besieged with calls, letters and angry phone calls; yet in this chamber, time after time, the Liberal government asks opposition members to support policies which continue that situation affecting oil. We use the dollars of the Canadian taxpayers to subsidize imported oil, and in some cases we make it cheaper than comparable Canadian oil. Therefore, Canadian jobs are lost, Canadian dollars are lost and the price goes up.

In March I stood in this House and said, "If the oil is 40 per cent cheaper because you subsidize it and because you pay refiners to import it, then I would hope that if I drove my car to Montreal, where that oil comes in, I would be able to buy gasoline cheaper than I might buy it in other parts of the country, for instance, in western Canada." But I think we all understand in this House that when we do drive our cars to Montreal, we do not find that gasoline is cheaper; we find that it is more expensive.

I asked the Prime Minister, and I hope the parliamentary secretary will tell me today, where the money goes. If taxpayers' dollars make that oil 40 per cent cheaper, but it is the same price or higher at the pump when I buy it, then where does the money go? Does it go into the pockets of the oil companies and is it being paid by retired people, people on fixed incomes, people who have to get to work each day? Where does the money go was the essence of the question. Certainly I received an unsatisfactory answer. I hope this evening with a little more time and preparation the parliamentary secretary will explain to the nation, and to our satisfaction, where the money goes.

● (2215)

If taxpayers' dollars are used to make it cheaper than when it is sold to the consumer, it should be cheaper. That is not the case. What it exemplifies for all of us is that when we put a dollar's worth of gasoline in our gas tanks, some 65 cents on average is for taxes and 35 cents is for the gasoline.

We have created a situation in this country where we must import more. Therefore, we drive down the value of our dollar, increase the cost of the goods we buy and at the same time throw Canadians out of work. That is the logic of the National