

S.O. 21

The federal Government has continued to insist that the private sector should be the engine of growth, but I think those of us who come from areas where the private sector dominates recognize that the private sector's recovery is considerably slower than the Government might otherwise wish.

Last year private sector investment fell 4 per cent, and this year it is predicted to decline 6.9 per cent. In Hamilton we have seen a net loss of jobs both in the private and in the public sector. Over the course of the last two years we have seen the Income Tax office and the Veterans Affairs office all but disappear from the area. We have seen CNCP Telex deciding to close its operations and the Government determined that the Oceanography Department should move from Hamilton to Quebec City. In the private sector we have seen Harvester virtually close; Bathurst announce that it will close and the Steel Company operating at a considerably reduced level of involvement.

I say to the Government that the private sector cannot do it alone, it needs Government involvement—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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[Translation]

FISHERIES

REQUEST FOR EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF KIRBY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. André Maltais (Manicouagan): Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a very important document on Canadian fisheries, namely, the Kirby report. On the North Shore, people are very interested in the various recommendations made in this report, and they have asked the Association des pêcheurs of the Middle North Shore, the Lower North Shore and Blanc-Sablon to see to it that these recommendations are implemented as soon as possible. This is very important because the North Shore fishermen want to continue developing their industry jointly with their South Shore colleagues, and we hope that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané) will do everything in his power to implement the recommendations in the Kirby report as soon as possible.

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AIR TRANSPORT

FUTURE OF QUEBECAIR

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, I have a few comments on the future of Quebecair. Some time ago, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) promised to make a proposal to the Government of Quebec, based on the financial statements of Quebecair. I hope that today, the Minister has acquired sufficient information on Quebecair's financial

situation to be able to make a proposal very soon, in view of the importance of this question for Quebec. Last week, the Member for Rimouski-Témiscouata (Mrs. Côté) severely criticized the threats made by the Quebec Minister of Transport to nationalize the company if Ottawa did not give an answer. The Minister had already threatened to let Quebecair go down the drain because of its financial situation. I therefore hope that the Minister will realize how important this question is, and that based on the company's financial statements and for the benefit of Quebecair employees and Quebec, he will be able to make a public proposal as soon as possible. That is what I am asking, Madam Speaker.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ECONOMY

STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FINANCE ON UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister explain to the House how the jobless workers of Canada can continue to have confidence in his Government when his Minister of Finance expresses the public view that he cannot hope to bring down unemployment by more than one per cent?

While the Prime Minister is answering that question, can he also inform the House whether his Finance Minister was expressing Government policy when he stated that all the unemployed could hope for is for economic forecasters, including his own, to be wrong?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, on the second question, the Hon. Member knows that that is not a statement of policy. It is an opinion, and probably a tongue-in-cheek opinion, about the validity of forecasting.

The first question is more serious, and the Hon. Member will realize that he is merely repeating what the Minister of Finance has been saying since his statement to the House last fall, that economic recovery is necessary and we will attempt to bring it on as soon as possible, but that the unemployment figures themselves will remain high for longer than we would like, and they will remain high even after real growth has returned to Canada. There will be a lag before the unemployment figures are seriously brought down.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES—REQUEST FOR REVERSAL

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister appears to be sharing the view of the Minister of Finance that his Government cannot hope to bring down unemployment by more than one per cent.