

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Employment. Yesterday, four respected social agencies from metropolitan Toronto, the Metro Labour Council, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Social Planning Council and the Coalition of Visible Minorities and Immigrant Women released a report to the Toronto city council calling for a city agency to address the growth of part-time jobs at the expense of full-time jobs, the growth of unemployment and to meet the need for job adjustment programs.

Given that these needs are the direct outcome of her government's policies, why is the minister ignoring these deplorable conditions in metro Toronto, and why does she remain inactive in the face of worsening social economic conditions in Toronto?

• (1440)

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, as usual, is way off base.

The government firmly believes—and I think he should listen to this—that the best response to poverty is two-fold. First is the creation of jobs that people can have to work at, and I remind him that the unemployment rate in Toronto is as low as it has ever been. The second is the training and the ability for people to take those jobs.

That is what we are doing through our labour force strategy and the Canadian Jobs Strategy where we have targeted particularly people in need. Through the programs that we have for people on social assistance, which was a program of this government, that is directed at those people who have the most needs.

It is our job as a government, and the member's job as a representative of the people of Toronto, to stand up in this House and say yes, that is what we need, and that is what is happening.

Mr. Volpe: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the minister that as a former educator I long ago learned the art of listening. It is something that she might have done because if she had learned to listen she would have heard some of the horror stories about the outcome of her UI legislation. In fact, the economic regions outlined

yesterday are going to make matters worse for the unemployed, particularly in major centres like Montreal and Toronto.

In view of the fact that there are over 74,000 unemployed in the city of Toronto, that there has been a job loss of over 2,400 full-time jobs in the course of the last three months alone, and that there are over 80,000 persons swelling the ranks of those who depend on food banks in the City of Toronto, largely as a result of her government's policies, and in view of the fact that the social planning council has already predicted an increase of over \$10 million in costs on the welfare rolls, what steps will the minister take to discharge her responsibilities to the residents of Toronto, or is she content to shift the burden on to the municipalities that cannot afford to play the role that rightly belongs to her and her government?

Mrs. McDougall: I would like to remind the hon. member of two things. First, in terms of the social assistance that is provided through municipalities, as he knows, 50 per cent is paid by the federal government. It is not in our interest, nor would we want to increase those numbers.

Second, I ran for public office in the city of Toronto because of the state the economy was driven to by the party that he represents when people in Toronto were forced to sell their houses, when they lost their businesses, when they lost their jobs—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I have with me today an economic analysis by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada regarding the impact of the proposed goods and services tax.

The analysis states that under the proposed goods and services tax, tourism is slated to lose \$1.2 billion a year and at least 30,000 Canadian jobs. Another analysis by the Tourism Research Institute of Canada states that under stage two the GST will lower employment in the service sector by 48,000 jobs. A third report by the hotel