

Oral Questions

Mr. Lalonde: If the hon. member is now saying that he is prepared to have the legislation amended, although he had indicated during our discussions that he was in favour of maintaining the legislation as it now exists, I shall be pleased to discuss this issue further with him. If he now wants a similar legislation to which he can refer, I suggest to him Bill S-9 which I tabled in the House about two years ago. It had been introduced in the Senate, and perhaps the hon. member might direct his remarks to me in light of that bill.

Mr. Beaudoin: Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary question. I suggest that the minister wants to mislead the House, for I have never said that I did not want to read it and I did not mean that we did not want to look into it; what I said was that we were not prepared to rush this bill through but that we were willing to discuss it. It is quite the contrary.

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I suddenly realize that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find out whether the hon. member's party is for or against the proposed amendments to this legislation. When I met him he simply indicated that his party would rather keep the Criminal Code as it now stands. Now, if the hon. is saying that his party is willing to change its position, I shall be pleased to discuss further this issue with him.

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● (1430)

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF OVERVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of nine of the ten members of the Board of Economic Development Ministers of this country who just gave a 46-numbered response to the recommendations of the Overview Committee dealing with industrial sector studies in this country, my question will be to the Deputy Prime Minister who happens to be the tenth member of that board.

Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of the fact that a meaningful comment of the Overview Committee was with regard to the urgency of having full employment in this country and the suggestion that the government should work to a full employment policy, and that notwithstanding that recommendation there was no response from the federal government with respect to this urgent matter?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of the response of the government to the proposals, recommendations or views of the Overview Committee. I realize that not all of the recommendations that have been made by the Overview Committee have been accepted by the government. Most of them have been accepted. Some of the recommendations must

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

be responded to by provincial governments because they are under provincial authority.

Maybe the hon. member can indicate precisely what recommendation has not been responded to and I will attempt to explain to him the reason for that. I would say, however, that as one looks at the table of contents, almost each and every one of the subjects has either a direct or an indirect bearing upon the pursuit of full employment. Of course, the whole purpose of the exercise was to promote economic growth in Canada as recommended by the committee and supported by the government.

Mr. Stevens: I refer the Deputy Prime Minister to the Overview report on manpower, where it states that "manpower policy should be, in the view of the committee, a full employment policy". There was no response by the federal government to that recommendation. Will the Deputy Prime Minister indicate whether the government in truth believes in full employment in this country and yet does not have a policy to deliver full employment?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, it seems rather curious that the hon. member would ask the Government of Canada whether it believes in a full employment policy. One of the main objectives of the financial and fiscal policy of the government is to promote increasing employment in Canada, as witnessed by the rather remarkable performance of the economy in the past year in producing additional jobs. However, I would say to the hon. member that on page 15 of the report, continuing the dialogue on industrial growth, there is a very extensive commentary on the part of the government to the recommendations of the Overview Committee on the question of manpower and labour relations.

Mr. Stevens: Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that the Canadian Labour Congress took great exception, in a press release released at eleven o'clock this morning, to the government's response with regard to their Overview recommendations, stating that the government's response is a "pre-election document that amounts to a breach of faith with private sector participants," and are even suggesting that the Congress may reconsider its participation in future exercises of this type?

If the minister is aware of that comment by the CLC, can he explain his earlier remarks to the House? Second, is he going to take any steps to try to ensure that the CLC does not pull out of the process, as it is suggesting it might do?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of the attitude of the CLC to this response of the Government of Canada until the hon. member for York-Simcoe drew it to the attention of the House. Indeed, it would be a matter of regret if the Canadian Labour Congress withdrew from this consultative process, which was novel, imaginative and useful and which involved not only the Congress but representatives from the academic community and industry.

I believe that any fair-minded citizen who reads this report would be stretching his imagination to conclude that it in any way represented a pre-election document. It was a government