

Oral Questions

margin to the level of about \$1.1 billion. I would point out that these are the same oil companies that receive \$1.1 billion, or perhaps even more, from the Government in PIP grants. Yesterday the Minister asked me where we would get the money to pay for the people who are presently unemployed and who do not get unemployment insurance, who are not eligible for welfare, and who cannot feed their families. Why does the Government not redirect this money that is currently being given to already prosperous operations, to those who need it most?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member does not quite understand how the oil industry operates.

When he talks about the overall profits of the oil industry, he should keep in mind the investments made in that industrial sector as well as the yield of those investments. He would come to the conclusion that the yield on the money invested is not excessive when one considers the facts and analyzes the profit-investment ratio. As to the Government grants, the Hon. Member will recall that we have discontinued the old system by eliminating tax incentives and replacing them by a grant system for Canadian businesses, which now receive more generous grants as an incentive to promote the oil industry.

The Party of the Hon. Member boasts that it wants to foster the growth of the Canadian industry. That is exactly what we have done through our tax reform in the oil sector. We have done away with tax incentives and replaced them by equivalent grants especially earmarked for the Canadian industry.

That is why I think that my colleague has a rather vague notion of what has been going on in the oil industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about fairness. It is unfair to tax Canadian taxpayers to provide money for multinational oil companies whose profits are already considerable. Those profits are derived primarily from Canada.

PLIGHT OF UNEMPLOYED

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister if it is not reasonable to think that we have an obligation to those hard working Canadians who have no jobs, and who, as a result of the Government's policies, find that they do not have the possibility of getting a job, who cannot afford to meet their commitments to their families, and who are in absolute desperation?

Dammit, is there no way the Government can find money to redirect to pay for those people's needs?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has a strong way of arguing in favour of the unemployed. If I were to follow his advice I would end up throwing tens of thousands of Canadian workers in the oil and gas industry, out on the street—

Mr. Deans: You did that already.

Mr. Lalonde:—in order supposedly to help people who are unemployed at the present time. The way to help the unemployed is not by creating more unemployment all over the country in the oil and gas industry.

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[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

REQUEST FOR INTERPRETATION OF SECTION 23(3)(B) OF
CHARTER OF RIGHTS

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice and concerns the interpretation his Department gave of Section 23(3)(b) of the Charter of Rights before the Ontario Court of Appeal last week.

Considering the rather restrictive and ambiguous interpretations being given by a number of observers regarding the rights of the minority to manage and control school facilities, could the Minister clarify his interpretation of Section 23(3)(b) in order to clear up once and for all the position of the federal Government on this matter, and finally, could he inform the House whether the Government intends to present additional briefs to the Court that would remove any ambiguity that may have been present in the federal interpretation of this section?

Mr. Speaker: The first part of the Hon. Member's question bothers me somewhat, but the second part should be in order. The Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, there are two principles in the federal Government's position on minority-language education. With the exception of Section 93 of the Constitution, the provincial Government has no obligation to share jurisdiction over education with its residents. The provinces therefore have full discretion to either keep authority over education within the Ministry of Education or to share some of that authority with School Boards and parents in the province.

Should a province decide to share its authority over education with its residents, it would then be under the obligation to ensure equal treatment of the majority and minority groups in the province. In the light of my hon. friend's representation, I shall certainly reconsider our Government's presentation before the Court, but as yet I have no indication that the Court has any difficulty interpreting our position.