

S. O. 21

I would suggest that NDP Members, who are so supportive of Canadian culture, should first learn how to read a book properly.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN RESTIGOUCHE

Mr. Albert Girard (Restigouche): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment upon the latest labour force report which, coincidentally, was issued last Friday, March 13. The contents of that report would indicate a drop in the unemployment rate for the economic region in which the riding of Restigouche is located. Is this a sign of good luck or bad luck, Mr. Speaker?

● (1405)

There are several factors that we must keep in mind. First, the rate is now at 16.1 per cent. By all accounts this is still unacceptably high. Second, our participation rate is the second lowest in the entire country. This means that a great many in my region have simply given up on trying to find work. These people are no longer counted in the ranks of the unemployed. They are the ones whose unemployment insurance benefits have expired and now they have been forced to turn to the province for welfare, or worse yet, to food banks and other voluntary organizations. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is this any way to decrease the unemployment rate? If all the people in Restigouche who are presently out of work were added to the official list, our unemployment rate would be over 50 per cent. I know it is hard to believe, but it is true.

We need real help and we need it fast. We need jobs, and we need them now.

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[*Translation*]

LAPRADE FUND

NEED FOR GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH RULES RAPIDLY

Mr. Gilles Grondin (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I wish simply to reassure my colleague the Hon. Member for Trois-Rivières by saying that I agree with him on the criteria made public last November as to the conditions a project should meet to become eligible to the Laprade Fund provided they are adhered to in practice. However, after a project has been deemed eligible to the Fund, there must be a follow-up. Well, since last November, the Government has been quite silent on this matter. Nobody knows the deadline for applying to this Fund, and nobody knows how to fill out the application.

The municipalities, industries and organizations do not know how to proceed. Treasury Board and DREE officials are passing the buck. Some claim that someone is working on a

form; others say that no form is being prepared. I was told a month ago that a press conference would be held in the near future to announce, among other things, the deadline for the submission of projects and forms, etc. That was a month ago.

Meanwhile, we hear that a number of projects have been submitted. How? Nobody knows. To whom? Nobody knows. Who are the resource people? Nobody knows. It reeks of patronage.

Mr. Speaker, \$87.3 million are at stake. If the Government wants to regain some credibility, if it wants to demonstrate a certain openness on this issue, it must set the rules of the game quickly. It should seek the participation of all Hon. Members in the 04 area, including those in the Opposition.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

CONSTRUCTION OF NORTHERN AIRSTRIPS

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Beatty) has announced the construction of five new airstrips in the North to let interceptors operate in the Arctic. This is supposed to enhance Canadian sovereignty, but will it? The Americans helped select those sites. They are picking up half the cost of constructing the airstrips. American F-15s will share these strips and operate from Canadian soil. How does that enhance Canadian sovereignty? What will happen when an American fighter takes off from Canadian soil and spots an American submarine sticking up through the ice in our waters? Will the pilot report the sighting to Canada or just wave as he flies over the *Polar 8* icebreaker?

We should be looking after our own airspace with our own aircraft. But the Government refuses to live up to this responsibility. Instead, it is content to pay lip service to Canadian sovereignty and let the Americans use our territory as they see fit.

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THE ECONOMY

INVESTORS' CONFIDENCE IN CANADA

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, today in Canada we have the economic paradox of falling interest rates and a rising dollar. The Canadian dollar is at its highest level since 1984 and the bank rate is at its lowest level since March, 1974. What better demonstration of the world's growing confidence in the Canadian economy and policies of our Government?