

Oral Questions

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, just to remind the Hon. Member, we put forward a very clear set of proposals under the youth employment strategy at the time of the budget debate. We referred that document for examination in front of the Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. In the meantime we have introduced a number of new proposals. The new proposal for wage subsidies for work experience programs would provide a brand new program to bring people into their first time jobs. There has been the proposal for youth job corps across Canada and proposals to provide substantially for more people in the Katimavik program and the DND program. We have those programs in place as well as the training programs. My attitude at this point is to get things happening rather than just go into further study.

REQUEST FOR EARLY STUDY

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Madam Speaker, the Minister well knows that criteria for programs like the youth internship program, which are desperately needed today, are not even in place yet. Students are coming on the job stream right now, this month and in the next month, and the Government will not likely have those criteria in place until Fall, at the very earliest. Can the Government not explore this very serious problem, which is not only an immediate problem but also one which will be going on for the next few years? Can it not be explored through a parliamentary task force?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I return to the point that the programs we introduced need some proper preparation, which means discussion with those in the private sector in particular, who would be the major sponsors and users of the wage subsidy program. We do not want to rush into something before it has been properly discussed and there have been consultations with that particular group, which is what we are now doing.

In terms of the longer range issue, as I have indicated we put forward a paper last January which laid out the dimensions of the problem and referred it to the provincial group for study. As I say, we are prepared to discuss it with colleagues in the House of Commons through the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration, which we have already initiated. Therefore, I am not sure why the Hon. Member would want to duplicate what has already been initiated.

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METRIC CONVERSION

ABOLITION OF COMMISSION

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. For approximately four years the Conservatives

have been arguing that we should abolish the Metric Commission and follow the course set by the U.K. and the United States in abolishing their metric boards and returning to a voluntary process of implementation. Would the Minister now be able to confirm to the House that the Metric Commission has been notified that it is being abolished?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am surprised to hear the Hon. Member saying that he has been asking for the abolition of the Metric Commission for four years, according to his own words. The Hon. Member may recall that the Progressive Conservative Party was in power for about ten months, and not only did it not abolish the Metric Commission but it even passed an Order in Council to put into effect part of the compulsory metric program. It was a Conservative Cabinet that approved this Order in Council, which is certainly not in line with the views of the Member for Peterborough. As for the Commission's duration, the Commission is doing its work, and despite the systematic opposition of the Progressive Conservative Member, it is about to finish its work, and as soon as it has, it will of course be dismantled according to plan.

[English]

Mr. Domm: I should point out that it was the Conservative Government in 1979 which abolished the Order in Council that brought metric into the retail food sector. It was the Liberal Government, in March of 1979, when it still held Cabinet position, which gazetted the order in council that brought metric into the floor covering business.

USE OF IMPERIAL MEASUREMENT IN STOCKYARDS

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Would the Minister confirm to the House that, under pressure from provincial Governments, from agricultural associations and organizations, and from consumers, the federal Government has decided to return to imperial measurement in the weighing of beef on import and export and that all the stockyards from Montreal through to Prince Rupert will remain or return, if they have converted, to imperial measurement?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I do know that at the present time agriculture, in total, is about 85 per cent metric. There was a delay by the previous Government, in the short-term, in converting the total beef operation into metric. There has been a delay in that. I believe the arrangement that the Hon. Member is talking about has been made.