

Oral Questions

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat it for the right hon. member. There is no government policy of the kind to which the right hon. member has referred. Therefore, the phasing out of these bands is not related to a wider policy such as the right hon. member has inferred.

Mr. Diefenbaker: You are trying to get rid of the "royal". You are the last person I thought would do that.

Mr. Richardson: What we are doing is making the Canadian armed forces still more efficient. We are answering a lot of requests for patrol flights over the Atlantic, for protecting fishing fleets, and finding other ways to really make our armed forces effective.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Now we have the answer why this is being done.

Mr. Blackburn: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the right hon. member would be permitted to put his final supplementary and then I will recognize the hon. member for Brant on his point of order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Now we have the answer, that this was done for the purpose of making the Canadian armed forces efficient. I ask the minister whether it will add to efficiency to knock out the Royal Air Force band, the Royal Canadian Regiment band, the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry band, and the Royal Canadian Artillery band. The Acting Prime Minister does not know anything about these things.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Brant.

Mr. Blackburn: Mr. Speaker, we have now wasted seven, eight or possibly ten minutes talking about something that is almost irrelevant.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blackburn: There are more important things in this country which is approaching having one million people out of work. That is a hell of a lot more important than whether a band is going to be disbanded or is "royal" or not.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY PROGRAMS TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): I would also like to get away from "royal" bands in view of the statistics released this morning that nearly one million people in this country are out of work.

An hon. Member: There will be 200 more when these bands are disbanded.

Mr. Leggatt: They will find jobs, or they can line up with the rest of the unemployed. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that there are 38,000 fewer jobs this year than there were last year, and the fact that we are quite clearly getting into a recession and maybe even a depression; and, by the way, in British Columbia we now have a rate of unemployment—

An hon. Member: Get Barrett.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Leggatt: A good many of those who are unemployed are Chinese: I hope we will all consider that, in view of the fact this is the Chinese new year. In view of these facts, will the minister advise whether he has any contingency plan with regard to providing some kind of emergency winter works program this year, or even a summer works program, in view of projections that this high rate of unemployment may continue because of the downturn in the United States economy?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we will be watching the American situation and the relationship between the United States administration and the United States congress. At the same time, we will be watching how the stimulus injected into our own economy by the November budget takes effect this month and in ensuing months. As for the British Columbia economy, I suggest to the hon. member that he might have regard to his own friends and how they treated the resource and mining industries—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): —and the woodworking industry in British Columbia.

Mr. Leggatt: In view of the fact that the largest increase in unemployment in this country is in Ontario, and not in British Columbia, will the minister advise if his reasoning is the same, namely, that the way the resource sector has been treated in Ontario is one of the reasons for their high jump in unemployment there? Will he also advise whether the unemployment in the British Columbia woodworking industry is in any way related to this government's housing policy?

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. As provinces which have the misfortune to be under the control of NDP governments are particularly hard hit because their economies are so badly handled, will the minister make special provision for those provinces under NDP control as they do not have the same chance in the economy as other provinces?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There are only ten minutes remaining in the question period. Perhaps the hon. member for Victoria will be permitted to ask a question.