

Oral Questions

● (1420)

Mr. Hawkes: I do not know who on the Minister's staff is giving him the speeches made by the Leader of the Opposition, but ten days ago in Thunder Bay the Leader of the Opposition laid out a program, with six principles and 16 specifics, that deals totally, absolutely, and entirely with the issue of training and what the country needs to do about it. It is now ten days later. If the Minister is reading those speeches, why has he not read that speech, and why does he not have an answer for us about that?

NEEDS OF WESTERN CANADIANS

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, as a Member from Outremont, which is a high income area, does the Minister believe that he understands what western Canadians need, better than the members of the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party who have been sent to this Chamber by the people who live in that region? We say to him that he has been wrong about energy, and wrong about transportation. We want a change, and we want it in the next ten days. Will your new Leader help us get that change within ten days?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have just heard the best example of the empty rhetoric that I referred to in my previous answers. I am glad that the Hon. Member is confirming my statement in that regard.

I must tell him that, as Minister of Finance, I am Minister for all Canadians, not any particular region or any particular constituents. I have been in the House for 12 years serving all Canadians, not any particular region or any particular constituency.

I must tell my hon. friend again that, rather than resorting to the empty words of the Leader of the Opposition, we have resorted to action. We passed in this Parliament—again against the footdragging and opposition of the Conservative Opposition—a new National Training Act which has had the support of the provinces and which is the most modern piece of legislation in that area. We have allocated over a billion dollars a year to that, which is by far the largest amount that has ever been allocated in this country for the training of young people and adults, and the retraining of workers.

In addition, we are now providing \$6 billion or \$7 billion a year to the provinces for post-secondary education, which is more than has ever been spent in this country by the federal Government in the area of post-secondary education. These are firm commitments by this Government to help the young people of the country to be ready to face the rest of this century, and the twenty-first century, well equipped.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT TAKE ACTION

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. First, I want to commiserate with Mr. Pierre Elliot Turner and the albatrosses

he is discovering that he will have around his neck, as he sits here today in this Chamber. By the way, I congratulate the Minister of Finance for not emulating the Deputy Prime Minister and scuttling across the convention floor like an anxious crab to a dead herring, as the Deputy Minister did.

Mr. Rossi: What happened to you?

Mr. Crosbie: There is no good in asking me to come with you; I won't do it.

It has been four months since the Minister's feeble Budget of February 15. The latest Statistics Canada figures on the use of industrial capacity show that we are stalled at about 71.7 per cent use of our industrial capacity, 10 per cent under what it was before the recession. Of course this means that jobs are not being created. There are 120,000 fewer jobs than in mid 1981. Does the Government plan any action now, or do we have to wait even longer than we have waited during this tiresome, preordained convention, for some action? Will something be done to get a grasp on this and begin an economic recovery in Canada?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, no doubt Canadians have heard the best news today. It is that the Hon. Member for St. John's West will not rejoin the Liberal Party that he left several years ago.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: Where did you begin, Marc?

Mr. Lalonde: He need fear nothing. We would not welcome him either, so he is all right over there.

I would suggest to my hon. friend that, indeed, we may do something today that would mean action immediately and would help the economy of the country. In approximately 35 minutes, my colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, is due to introduce a Ways and Means motion, to introduce all of the amendments to the Income Tax Act that have been considered already by the parliamentary committee and which will mean a very significant reduction in the burden on small business and medium-size business. I invite the Opposition to pass this Bill immediately. It would show a spirit of co-operation in terms of helping the unemployed and in terms of giving a good spur to the economy.

Mr. Crosbie: First, of course, I was ahead of my time. Hundreds of thousands will desert the Liberal Party in the next few weeks.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ACTION TO HELP UNEMPLOYED

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Fulton musketeer, the old Tory. The Minister was an old Tory back in the days when he thought it was advantageous for him to be a Tory.

New investment in factories, offices, and homes is declining. Capital spending is down for the third year in a row. Housing starts are fading. The leading indicators of the Canadian