

THE ECONOMY

ECONOMIC STATEMENT—EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Prime Minister. The Government announced its targets for deficit reduction in its economic statement but continues to keep secret the impact and the effects of its statement on the numbers of persons who will lose their jobs due to it.

Is the Prime Minister now prepared to provide for the House of Commons the projected targets, both in terms of job creation and in terms of unemployment reduction, which the Government has set in order to provide the necessary jobs for the 1.5 million people who are presently unemployed and for the other 50,000—or however many there are—who will become unemployed as a result of the economic direction the Government is taking?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister gave the main thrusts in his economic statement. I think the Hon. Member would agree that the first action which we took was but one variable that will come together with a series of others pursuant to consultations with trade unions, the private sector, and the provinces. The full budgetary documents that will be brought down by the Minister in the spring, which will be the first full opportunity we will have to deal with the kinds of specifics the Hon. Member wishes, will be made available at that time.

JOB CREATION—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that at some time in the spring the analysis might well be completed and that he, or the Government, will be prepared to make the targets known. The problem is that we have about 1.5 million people who are unemployed. The Prime Minister said during the campaign that he and his Government, if elected, would be able to create tens of thousands of jobs. I ask the Prime Minister on behalf of those people, many of whom do not collect unemployment insurance or do not qualify for public assistance, when they can expect to see the benefits of the program which the Prime Minister touted around the country as being the way toward an economic Utopia.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I never at any time suggested that there would be an economic Utopia. I indicated across the country that the new Government would be confronted with grave economic problems, and that was true. However, in point of fact, since the election and the swearing in of the new Government, even though the improvements have been modest they are there—32,000 new jobs were created, interest rates have dropped to record levels, and inflation is at a record low. Those are the beginnings of the kinds of things which can be accomplished by working together.

Presence in Gallery GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): At the rate of 32,000 jobs per month, it would take the better part of five years to achieve the numbers of jobs we might require to meet the existing numbers of unemployed persons. Does the Prime Minister suggest to those 1.5 million people that they must wait until after the next election in order to see the jobs necessary for them to find work?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have made no such suggestion, and the Hon. Member knows that is—

Mr. Deans: At 32,000 a month.

Mr. Mulroney: If the Hon. Member will accept 32,000 a month, for openers that would be pretty good. Let me put it this way. It is 32,000 people, 32,000 heads of households who are back at work today who were not at work when we came in, and that is a major accomplishment. As a Member of this House, he should be proud of it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr. Speaker: I would like to advise the House that we have a number of visitors in our Gallery today, including the Hon. Gordon Dirks, Minister of Social Services for the Province of Saskatchewan—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: —the new Commander-in-Chief of Norad, General Robert T. Herres—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: —and, dear to my heart, the members of the Canadian National Culinary Team, winners of the World Championship of the Nations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin: Send them to the Parliamentary Restaurant.

Mr. Speaker: The comment about the Parliamentary Restaurant was heard.