

month went down. Is down now the same as up in the Liberal lexicon? Or is up, down? Is in, out?

Are the views of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the little Lord Fauntleroy of the new Liberalism, the economic views of the Government, or is he to be asked to tender his resignation for the foolish and deceitful statements he made last Friday in Calgary?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member could at least listen. I told him that the labour force had gone down two-tenths of one per cent last month.

Mr. Crosbie: Your colleague said it went up.

Mr. Lalonde: I also told him that the labour force in Canada in 1983 grew by some 58 per cent more compared to the United States. These are facts that my friend can check.

Again, it is true that you cannot simply judge a performance of the economy by the results of the unemployment figures for one month. You also have to look at the results in terms of productivity, the results in terms of growth of the economy, results in terms of the reduction of inflation, results in terms of the trade balance of this country and our record exports that we know at the present time.

Mr. Crosbie: Answer the question.

Mr. Lalonde: These are all factors that one must look at when one wants to look at the performance of the Canadian economy. You cannot just take one figure for one month—

Mr. Crosbie: Are they a bad guide?

Mr. Lalonde: — and try to extrapolate this for the whole economy. If you have any knowledge of this area, you know that you have to bear in mind all of the factors that I have mentioned.

Mr. Crosbie: Are they a bad guide?

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THE ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT POLICY—STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO
MINISTER OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian public have looked at the results of the Government's economic policy, which is why they will throw the Government out in the next election.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. His Minister responsible for economic development is openly criticizing the Government's energy policy, including the National Energy Program, and now the Minister is advocating the sale of Petro-Canada service stations. He may not be aware that Petro-Canada only owns 116 of the 3,000 service stations, the rest of which are leased or are independents.

Oral Questions

My question is about Cabinet solidarity. In view of the long established parliamentary tradition that when a Minister is openly critical of Cabinet policy, that Minister resigns, has the Prime Minister asked for this Minister's resignation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Ministers who are running for the leadership of the Liberal Party are talking about the future and things that they would do if they became Prime Minister, which one of them certainly will, one of the leadership candidates will become Prime Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: It will be very brief.

Mr. Trudeau: I find it normal that those Ministers would indicate how they intend to govern in the future when they are Prime Minister. They are setting out their views for the delegates to hear, and they are permitting the Canadian people to know their position, which is more than the Conservative Party is doing. We are out in front with our policies and we are looking at the future. I see nothing wrong with that.

Miss Carney: We are being aided in our attacks on the Government's policy by the Prime Minister's own Ministers, and we have lots of time to review our policy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON PETRO-CANADA GASOLINE STATIONS

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. I would like to quote the exact statement made by the Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development. It has nothing to do with the future; it concerns basic Party philosophy. He said:

I don't see that the Government needs to retail gas any more than it needs to retail chocolates.

If that is not an example of abandoning Cabinet solidarity, what is? Why does the Prime Minister tolerate this open criticism of his own Government's policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the Minister made it quite clear that he had supported the purchase of multinational corporations, including some which were retailing gas, and he was looking at problems he would examine in the future. He was indicating that he would consider what he would do with retailing of gas. I see nothing wrong with that. If the Minister and a future Prime Minister want to say that they will differ in some way from policies they adopted, it will be up to the delegates and the Canadian people to judge them.