

Among industrialized nations, Canada's economic performance was the worst during the recession and her apparent recovery depends solely on the vagaries of consumer spending.

If I may elaborate on my question, I should like to quote another excerpt of the GATT report which appeared in *Le Devoir* of November 26, 1983:

In its report on 1982-83 international trade, GATT points out that the "continuous degradation of international trade conditions" explains the weakness of the recovery. According to this organization, "the current recovery may very well be short-lived unless international markets become more easily accessible".

Considering that Canada still has an unprecedented \$31.2 billion deficit for 1983, GATT maintains that "budgetary deficits ought to be the main target in any effort to boost savings".

Since those forecasts were made by an international organization whose credibility is widely acknowledged by all economists, both in Canada and abroad, could the Leader of the Government comment on Canada's economic outlook?

[English]

• (1110)

Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, what Senator Asselin has just read to us is the opinion of someone at GATT. That is not a fact. When someone describes something as being the best, worst or average situation, that is obviously an opinion. I am not going to argue that that is anything different. We know we are highly dependent on international trade for Canada's internal economic activity.

You can also read other reports. In fact, one recent report from the OECD says that Canada's growth performance during the past few months has been the best in the western world.

Senator Asselin: Who said that?

Senator Olson: The OECD said that.

Senator Asselin: Is that your opinion?

Senator Olson: Do you know what the initials OECD stand for? Of course, you do. There are many different opinions.

Obviously, when commencing a new session, which in this case will be inaugurated by a Speech from the Throne, projections are made by the government, and the government intends to make projections in the upcoming Speech from the Throne. During the debate on that Speech from the Throne, Senator Asselin, I and others can bring these matters to the attention of the Senate.

What he has read to us, as I said earlier, is an opinion held by someone at GATT. That is not necessarily fact.

[Translation]

Senator Asselin: I have a supplementary question. Is the Minister aware that there are in Canada a million and a half unemployed people looking for jobs, which is a source of great

concern for many young Canadians? I hate to say this in this house, but in my area two young people between 20 and 25 years of age took their own lives last week because they had failed for nearly a year and a half in their search for jobs.

It is a fact, therefore, that our young people are deeply concerned about this situation. Does the Minister think that a great many of these million and a half unemployed feel as he does that everything is fine and dandy in this best of all possible worlds and that our economy is in good hands?

[English]

Senator Olson: No, the Minister of Finance, in particular, but other ministers as well have expressed their deep concern about the levels of unemployment, along with their determination to do what is possible to ameliorate that to the greatest extent possible.

Of course, that involves a number of the matters contained in the budget and the programs that arose from those budgetary considerations for the purpose of relieving as much of the inherent distress as possible. The government has consistently said that.

• (1115)

The point I wanted to make was that, according to the OECD, we have had the greatest growth factor, from the bottom of the recession to this point in time, of any country in the industrialized western world.

[Translation]

Senator Asselin: Does not the Minister feel that in order to reassure potential investors, the government should lead the way and reduce our current \$31.2 billion deficit and that it should control its expenses more closely to attract foreign investments in Canada?

[English]

Senator Olson: A great deal of the funding in the whole of the federal budget, including the deficit, is specifically designed to create jobs so that it would have exactly the opposite effect.

Senator Asselin: The contrary has happened.

Senator Olson: The contrary has not happened. What has happened is that there has been a remarkable—and better than any other nation—increase in employment in our economy during the past few months.

Senator Asselin: What about the number of unemployed during the past few months?

Senator Olson: That was deliberately designed to have that effect, but that does not mean to say that the results so far are completely satisfactory. As long as there are unemployed people, this government will try to create more jobs and more economic activity to relieve that distress.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I do not like to dampen my honourable friend's enthusiasm for economic progress in the country insofar as it is real, because I share it, but surely he recognizes that the statistics issued within the last week indicate that the