

Oral Questions

holders alike. Re-Mor, the mortgage arm of Astra Trust, has bilked millions of dollars from the public through business practices which can be classed as misrepresentation, fraud, deception, bait and switch, and other thoroughly dishonest practices planned and carried out by the management and directors of Astra Trust, Re-Mor and C & M Financial Consultants. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for St. Catharines (Mr. Reid):

That the Minister of Finance initiate a judicial inquiry into the Astra Trust affair and include in the inquiry the affairs of Re-Mor and C & M Financial Consultants and require that in particular the inquiry dwell in some detail on the fact that the trust licence for Astra Trust was turned down three times by the Department of Insurance, as well as the province of Ontario, before it was finally issued on November 17, 1977.

Madam Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to introduce the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

CALL FOR ASSISTANCE TO ATLANTIC PROVINCES—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, another blow to Atlantic Canada as a result of the maritime minister's financial fiasco of October 28, and subsequent indifference to the miseries which are accruing in a compound fashion, has been struck. The Canadian Gypsum Co. Ltd. will close its operations in Hillsborough, New Brunswick, as of December 31 due to a lack of markets, throwing approximately 60 people out of work. The government railway, the CNR, has made application to abandon its line from Salisbury to Hillsborough. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Prince George-Bulkley Valley (Mr. McCuish):

That this government either move immediately to alleviate the desperate straits of Atlantic Canadians typified by communities such as Hillsborough, or level with the people and tell them they do not give a damn about Atlantic Canada so that Atlantic Canadians will realize the hopelessness of their situation and make plans to starve to death.

Madam Speaker: Presentation of such a motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

• (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF CANADA

FORECAST RESPECTING WAGE LEVELS—PROGRAMS TO CREATE JOBS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance who will know that the Economic Council of Canada is forecasting that real wages of Canadians will drop more than 4 per cent this year and next. Will the minister tell the House whether he intends to introduce any new policy to stop that dramatic cut in the ability of average Canadians to buy what they need?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, without commenting upon the validity of the forecast made by the Economic Council of Canada, it is not my intention to alter at the present time the budget policies which were introduced on October 28.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, the minister has indicated that he does not at the present time—whatever that means—intend to do anything about the fact that the real income of Canadians, their ability to earn enough money to buy the things they need, will be dramatically cut. He would know that his government's policies are also cutting out the ability of Canadians to find work. He would know that the number of people who are not even seeking work now, because they feel hopeless and desperate as there is no work for them to find, is up 25 per cent over a year ago. Does the minister intend to introduce any new measures to create the hope of jobs for Canadians who want to go to work?

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, I know that over the past year the number of jobs in Canada has increased significantly. The last statement from Statistics Canada shows that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Canada over the month had decreased, and that it had decreased in every region of Canada but one. I know these facts as well, Madam Speaker, but despite these facts I did lay out in the budget a series of programs which, in my view, will contribute significantly to the quality of the recovery which Canada needs over the medium term.

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, the people of Canada are tiring of this baffle-gab from the Minister of Finance. They know even if the Minister of Finance intends to ignore it that the number of unemployed in Canada is up and the number of people who are so hopeless about the prospect of getting a job is up dramatically over the last year.

The minister repeated again today that he had no plans "at the present time". Last Wednesday he had no plans at all. On Thursday he said that he had not yet decided to introduce any