

services that are available from this particular department to cope with a lay-off situation.

Mr. Broadbent: That is why I asked the question.

Mr. Cullen: The hon. member chooses to ignore the many excellent things which are being done in that field. In addition to that, we have regular discussions. We have an inter-departmental committee which meets on these specific problems. This is not something which has just come to light in recent statistics. This is something which we indicated would happen as early as October, 1976, when we were able to provide \$358 million and later \$458 million through Treasury Board to take care of this problem, which as I say we recognized some time ago and not as the result of a recent headline.

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FINANCE

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION OF HALL REPORT TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR RAILWAY WORKERS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, and maybe the Minister of Finance will answer the question. I asked what the government was doing specifically with regard to the 6,000 railway workers who are affected. I did not ask for one of the minister's old speeches. I now ask the Minister of Finance this question. Considering that the Hall royal commission recommendations, if they were implemented, would affect in a very positive way job creation and bring benefits to the prairies, Quebec and Atlantic Canada, and in particular provide jobs for up to 4,000 people in Pictou county and Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where they manufacture railway cars and track, would the Minister of Finance now commit the government to implementing the central recommendations made by the Hall royal commission over the next two years?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the people involved are meeting with my colleague the Minister of Labour later this afternoon to discuss this problem. So far as the Hall report is concerned, we have received the report and we think it is an excellent one. We shall be looking at all policy aspects of the report, and as soon as policy is developed the House will be informed of its progress.

Mr. Broadbent: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister should know that the Minister of Transport has committed the government to spending only about one-fifth of what is required. He has committed the government to only \$100 million over the next two years which will provide minimal upgrading. This is why I ask the Minister of Finance whether he would undertake on behalf of the government a reconsideration of this commitment and provide the needed \$500 million on the ground that this would provide additional jobs, jobs that are important in three different areas of Canada. In addition, there is the important fact that it makes a lot more sense to provide people with jobs than with handouts.

Oral Questions

● (1427)

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say to the Leader of the New Democratic Party that \$100 million is quite a lot of money, and of course we are looking at other alternatives, but I am not in a position to give more to the House at this moment.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRIME MINISTER'S REFERENCE TO FINDING OF ELECTRONIC DEVICE IN OFFICE OF MEMBER FOR CENTRAL NOVA

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, before putting my question I would be remiss if I did not place on the record of this House a welcome to Your Honour upon your return from a recent visit to the Yukon where you performed a very pleasant and historic function in the presentation of a table to the Yukon Legislative Assembly. That was a ceremony I could not attend because of other pressing matters here in this part of the country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: I get it whether I am here or there.

The Prime Minister was quoted outside this House as saying that the device found in the office of the hon. member for Central Nova could be purchased in a five and ten cent store. May I ask the Minister of Justice, in connection with that remark and also the remark of the Prime Minister that it was amateurish in the manner of its installation, to advise the Prime Minister that the device found in the office of the hon. member for Central Nova cannot be purchased in Canada? Would he also advise the Prime Minister that it is an offence to have in one's possession the device found in the office of the hon. member?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I made it clear in the House last Thursday that under the Criminal Code it is a serious offence to have in one's possession, unless authorized, any device for electronic surveillance of private communications. With regard to the specific question and that specific device I am unable to reply to the hon. member's question because as the hon. member may know, my officers or officers of the RCMP have not been allowed to investigate that particular matter because the investigation of the matter is quite properly under the jurisdiction of Mr. Speaker and his officers.

Mr. Nielsen: The Prime Minister also suggested to the media that the hon. member for Central Nova advanced the notion that official authorities were responsible for placing this device in his office. Indeed, I think he put it in stronger terms. Would the minister undertake to inform the Prime Minister that at no time has such a statement been attributed to the hon. member for Central Nova. What he said was that—