

Oral Questions

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this Government has done more for immigrant women than any Government in the history of Canada. We have done it through—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McDougall: That includes both language training and training programs that are specifically targeted toward immigrant women who have a particular employment need and who have problems that other people in the working community do not have. That is why we established those programs. They apply to people in the garment industry as they apply to people in other industries. However, let me say that the Hon. Member is taking the most vulnerable sector in our society and telling it that it has no future. That is wrong, and he should not be saying that.

DE GRANDPRÉ COMMISSION—INTERIM REPORT QUERY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister whose office told me he would be here not 15 minutes ago, I have a question for the Minister for International Trade. On Wednesday when I raised questions in the House about the effects of the trade deal on workers who are being laid off right now, not in the future, the Prime Minister said to me with reference to his blue ribbon committee that it would be most valuable for workers and that it would be discussing an interim report today, thus attempting to deflect any criticism in the House on Wednesday.

I would ask my question of the Minister since the Prime Minister is not here.

A member of the committee, Mr. James McCambly, whom the Prime Minister himself mentioned in the House on Wednesday, said there is no interim report and that such an interim report had never even been discussed by the committee, and the senior economist for the committee is quoted today in *The Globe and Mail* as saying that there is no plan to issue an interim report. Who is telling the truth, the Prime Minister or members of the committee?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the answer, of course, is that both the Prime Minister and the members of the committee

are telling the truth. If I might refer to *Hansard* of December 14, the Prime Minister said this:

“Nobody is talking about waiting until June and the fact is that Mr. de Grandpré is scheduled to meet with the Ministers responsible as early as Friday of this week to discuss an interim report.”

We discussed this morning an interim report, and we concluded with the committee that there was no need for it to bring in an interim report because it made its interim report to us at this meeting. They reported that there was no emergency situation in effect. They reported they will be in a position to bring in their final report in a very reasonable period of time.

• (1130)

There is nothing that the Prime Minister has said or any member of the committee that is incorrect. That is the position. Their report will be a final report and that will be brought in as soon as possible. Their interim report was made to us this morning and we agree they do not need to put in a written interim report.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, it is very obvious to every Member of the House and to any person in Canada watching this that we on this side of the House were misled on Wednesday. The Cabinet is trying to bail itself out. That is the truth. The Cabinet has come back into the House to try to undo on Friday what it screwed up, to put it bluntly, on Wednesday. That is what it has tried to do.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Be honest, Ed.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister suggested on Wednesday to the workers of Canada—

An Hon. Member: Bob White has you spooked.

Mr. Broadbent: —that there would be an interim report and that it was going to be discussed today, thus conveying a message that their concerns would be addressed now. Is the Minister not only contradicting what the committee members have said but contradicting what the Prime Minister said on Wednesday when he was trying to tell workers that, rest assured, there would be an interim report and the Government would do something? Come clean with the people of Canada.