

Oral Questions

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, I just want to say to the Prime Minister that we in this Party, and I think most Canadians, are concerned about the deployment of all kinds of nuclear weapons. We do not make that kind of distinction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

HARASSMENT OF PEACE GROUP IN SOVIET UNION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, in taking time to answer that question the Prime Minister did not reply to my second question. I hope he will come back to that.

My third question concerns the right of groups anywhere in the world to act freely in mobilizing public opinion even if it means going against their Government on the important issue of nuclear disarmament. There is, as the Prime Minister knows, an important group of this kind in the Soviet Union, a Moscow based group, which has been attempting to establish mutual relationships between the people of the Soviet Union and the United States. My question concerns the harassment this group has been subjected to by the Government of the Soviet Union.

Did the Prime Minister raise that important question with Mr. Gorbachev when he spoke with him, and specifically did he make an appeal concerning Mr. Batovrin and Professor Medvekov who have been incarcerated in the Soviet Union, to see if they could be freed in order to pursue, independently of their Government, the issue of nuclear disarmament?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Madam Speaker, I regret I did not.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

THREAT TO JOBS FROM NEW TECHNOLOGY

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Last week the Minister, in a speech to the Canadian Advanced Technology Association, expressed his fears over the possibility or prospect of violence as a result of workers being displaced by high technology, or as a result of jobs being made redundant by the new high technology. He went on to state that there would be violence unless Governments and employers took steps now.

● (1430)

Now that the Minister has identified the problem, a problem which we all foresee and which has been highlighted by others, what leadership is he providing on behalf of the Government of Canada to bring employers and other levels of Government together to try to avert what could in fact be our summer of discontent?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, in terms of the Hon. Member's initial statement, I was not projecting any mass

sense of disturbance. I am saying that there can be a potential of some real job disruption unless there is real co-operation and partnership between major parts of the economy. If the Hon. Member is asking for a demonstration of that, I would point out to him that just yesterday I signed a contract with a high technology consortium in Ontario to establish a new training institute to help retrain workers in high technology development under the Skills Growth Fund of the National Training Act. The National Training Act has given us the basis for starting those kinds of acts of partnership and co-operation that we are discussing. What we need now is more acts of co-operation on the part of the Opposition.

Mr. McGrath: I will tell the Minister that the Opposition is ready to co-operate if the Government will show us some leadership or some indication of leadership in an area in which, according to consensus, there is cause for real concern.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Can the Minister of Employment and Immigration tell the House what the Government proposes to do about the prospects of long-term youth unemployment? I can refer the Minister to studies which were released last week. I can refer him to studies commissioned by the Government in which fear was expressed that young people without the prospects of jobs will turn to drugs and alcohol, and, subsequently, violence, unless something is done. One sociologist said, "Essentially, we are talking about a new lost generation. Collectively, we may see political riots and disturbances from a group which feels left out." The rate of unemployment amongst our young people is 21.5 per cent, with no prospects. They are the left out group.

May I ask the Minister what is the Government doing? Are there any studies by his Department or by his colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, to provide some answers to what we see as being very dangerous signals of a potential social problem of great proportions?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, unlike the Hon. Member, we are not just concerned about undertaking studies. We are concerned about undertaking action. As he is well aware, in the last budget we introduced a number of new initiatives to deal specifically with the problem of young people coming on to the job market.

Under the new Access Program we will work, again in close co-operation with the private sector, to develop a job experience training program so that young people may obtain first-time jobs. I am now meeting with different business groups across the country, labour groups, to discuss how that program, which is scheduled for implementation in September, can be brought forward with the maximum amount of participation by the private sector so that we can bring tens of thousands of young people into that first time job experience. That is only one example of a number of initiatives we have