

POLITICAL PARTIES

REACTION OF PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS TO EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Members of the Tory Party laughed when I asked about workers' safety on Canada Works projects.

Mr. Thacker: You're a liar.

Mr. Manly: What was so funny? Did the Tories laugh at the large number of people who have to take jobs at low wages? Did they laugh at the suggestion that these workers were entitled to some form of safety committee and grievance procedure?

Mr. Blenkarn: No; at you.

Mr. Manly: Maybe these same Tory Members could go out and visit some of the crews on Canada Works projects. They could find out how funny it is to try to maintain a home and support a family on these low wages. They could joke about safety conditions, with workers doing heavy manual labour and working with power equipment outdoors in all kinds of weather.

The Tories called the Minister of Employment and Immigration two-faced when he promised to look into the question. Whether he was two-faced on this, only time will tell. But at least he had enough political sensitivity to realize that this was an important question. The Conservatives are completely insensitive to the needs of working people in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Manly: Safety in the work place is not a laughing matter, and Canadians can do without the Tory sense of humour.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

RETENTION OF CANADIAN FORCES BASE CHATHAM, N.B.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, some two and a half years ago a government decision was made with regard to CFB Chatham which seemed at the time to be a staggering blow to the town of Chatham and the riding of Northumberland-Miramichi. However, at the time the Government also said it would make every effort to compensate for that loss, and to replace it. Yesterday the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Blais) went to Chatham and announced that what was about to become a dead military base would in fact be given new life and would have a long-term future.

While the Tories and NDP in New Brunswick were playing politics with the issue, many people here in Ottawa, and officials in the region, were working hard to solve the problem. It has been solved, and I want to express gratitude on my behalf and on behalf of all of my constituents for the decision

Oral Questions

the Government made with regard to Chatham which will give it a long-term future with 1,400 employees.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ADMINISTRATION

LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN—MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister I will direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development, who is hovering in the background.

Mr. Wilson: Hobbling in the background.

An Hon. Member: Here is the Prime Minister.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may direct my question to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Yesterday in Toronto the Minister of State for Economic Development criticized the Industrial and Regional Development Program, for which he is partly responsible as chairman of the Cabinet Committee for Economic Development, when he said:

I get the feeling it's just not working.

I believe it has a tendency to build on economic weaknesses rather than on economic strengths.

This is the same Minister who said a few weeks ago, and I quote:

● (1415)

Instead of propping up run-down trucking firms, bankrupt computer companies and over-stuffed government Departments, we should be investing more money in our people.

Surely we have arrived at a point in time when enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. Cabinet solidarity and that convention notwithstanding, how can the Prime Minister condone the continuous presence in the Cabinet of a Minister who would criticize the very program for which he is responsible?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I will reply to that question if I may. I wish the Hon. Member would have a look at my speech, provided he promises not to use any of the ideas set forth therein, as Members opposite have in the past. The fact is that during this leadership convention a number of us have been travelling coast to coast, meeting with people. Of course I do that in the course of my responsibilities in any event.

With regard to the particular program which I discussed last night, in the small and medium-sized business sectors there have been many questions raised with me which I feel must be addressed. I am inclined to the view that in that small