

Oral Questions

will emerge and that is the policy course that we are going to continue to follow. [English]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister.

The Minister of Finance fails to recognize the pain in this country, the loss of hope by young people who have an unemployment rate of almost 20 per cent. The government owes it to the Canadian people to say what it is prepared to do to turn around this situation rather than simply ignore the plight of so many Canadians.

[Translation]

For instance, one third of the people on unemployment live in Quebec, and 700,000 Quebecers are on welfare. All these people are the victims of Tory economic policies, victims of the failure of those policies. That is why I wish to direct the following question to the Prime Minister. Does he agree with his Minister of Finance when he says that the government has no reason to change its economic policies?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance just stressed a number of important positive elements in the development of Canada's economy. He admitted that unemployment was a major problem. All members of all political parties deplore, and rightly so, the employment rate in this country which is very high, too high, although this is a situation that has endured since the early eighties. However, I think the Leader of the New Democratic Party should be encouraged by the opinions expressed by the IMF and the OECD, two major international agencies which think that the changes introduced by the Canadian government are likely to promote productivity and improve our competitive position, thus creating a substantial number of jobs in this country.

This will not happen overnight, but I think we have every reason to be confident about the future, considering the policies that were and will be announced by the Minister of Finance.

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

This party is not asking the government to produce miracles. We are just asking it to produce some ideas and to put forward a plan to address the severe job shortages in the country.

We promised Canadians that we would come back to Parliament and it would not be business as usual. We would all turn our attention to the economy. What we have heard from the government today is that it is going to do more of the same. If that is turning its attention to the economy, please do not.

I want to ask the Prime Minister this specifically. We will put aside the rhetoric and get down to the bottom line. The government has an opportunity to save tens of thousands of jobs in the airline industry but it must act within the next few days. Does the government have a plan? Is it going to act and what exactly is it prepared to do?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, of course the members of this government, and all members on the opposition side, are concerned with the potential loss of 16,000 jobs at Canadian Airlines.

Over the past couple of days we have had extensive and very productive meetings with the three groups that are involved, namely the Council of Employees, PWA and AMR, to determine how we can arrive at a plan that would ensure the survival of Canadian Airlines without hurting the whole Canadian airline industry.

In other words we need to find a solution that would be profitable to all the people of Canada and at the same time ensuring that we have a profitable and safe airline industry in Canada.

We were extremely impressed by the commitment of all employees. All unionized employees have come together, accepted some wage concessions and have also agreed to invest their own money in their employer. This is a demonstration of their dedication. We are meeting with them to try to arrive at a viable solution.