

Oral Questions

will have more efficient manufacturing plants, both in terms of production and equipment, and also in terms of labour production. This is taking place at the present time. It means that we are better able to compete in the world to sell our goods, both in Canada and abroad. If we were not more productive, we would even have more unemployment than at present. That is the first result of greater productivity. It shows in the record exports that we have at the present time. In Canada it shows that we are competing well in terms of other countries.

If you are going to be more productive and efficient, it will take some time before the plants expand and additional jobs are created. They are generated by increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and competitiveness. This is what we are doing. I regret that it takes time. I would like to be able to guarantee to my friend's constituents that they can have a job tomorrow morning, but I cannot guarantee that.

We have in place a set of policies which ensure that this country is becoming more efficient and productive. We are on the right track, and we will see a gradual reduction in unemployment. We are going to be able to compete in the world.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of Finance is hobnobbing with the can-can girls in Place Pigalle, I want him to know he goes with our blessing if he promises never to come back and touch the Canadian economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: After the damage that he has inflicted on hundreds and hundreds of thousands of Canadian families, I hope he has the decency to stay there in his golden retirement.

* * *

DISASTERS**GLACE BAY MINING TRAGEDY**

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the smiling Acting Prime Minister whose smile mystifies me given the results of the poll today. Can the Minister bring us up to date on the current situation with regard to the Glace Bay mining disaster where a man is trapped and the slopes, I understand, are presently being sealed to contain the fire? Can the Acting Prime Minister bring us up to date and give a full report in that regard?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, the reason I was smiling was simply that, having heard so often about civility from my hon. friend, I realized how rapidly he is becoming uncivil.

The Acting Minister of Mines will have a report on Glace Bay. I am sorry I do not have it now. If he does not have it, I will obtain it very rapidly. The Minister of Labour may have it.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that I have never changed my mind with regard to the Acting Prime Minister. He was, and is, a civil gentleman, but he must be as shocked and dismayed as I am at the lack of principle when the Minister of Finance, and that Government, have put 1.5 million people out of work, and he has the indecency to scurry off to Paris at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer. There is the indecency that causes me, Mr. Acting Prime Minister, to lose some of my civility, and I think you will understand that.

With regard to the matter I have raised, is it the intention of—

[Translation]

Oh, I hit a sore spot! You might as well get a job in Paris too, because you will not have any jobs left in Quebec. The Quebecers have had it up to here with you lot! You are finished in Quebec!

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would invite the Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition to speak to the Chair.

Mr. Mulroney: Quebecers and Canadians have had it up to here with the hypocrisy of people who inflict unemployment on Canadians and then go off to a cushy job in Paris. Quebecers have had enough.

● (1140)

[English]

Regarding the question I was asking the Acting Prime Minister, is it the intention of the Government, given the serious nature of this matter, to proceed with a public inquiry into the disaster involving loss of life? The question of mine safety regulations has been long studied but not acted upon.

Will the public inquiry also be given a mandate to consider the serious unemployment situation in the Glace Bay area, which now exceeds 20 per cent? In that area people are urgently crying out for help and employment possibilities, notwithstanding their abandonment by the Minister of Finance who is scurrying off to Europe to hide from the sad realities of the Canadian economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I understand that one of my colleagues will answer the question about Glace Bay.

Before sitting down, I would like to inform the Leader of the Official Opposition that the position of Secretary General of the OECD, which is being mentioned as a possibility for the Minister of Finance of Canada, is a position that carries a great deal of distinction and is very sought after. It is an honour for him and an honour for Canada that he has been approached for this position.