

*Oral Questions*

wrong on the optimistic side. This one is particularly pessimistic. We hope that it will be proven wrong as previous optimistic forecasts were proven wrong.

As the Hon. Member also knows, a number of forecasts have been made by private Canadian institutions over the last few months. These forecasts all indicate that unemployment in Canada will remain high in the next year, that we can expect a gradual decline of unemployment during the course of the year, and a gradual recovery. The forecasts for recovery vary between institutions, but up to now all institutions which have made forecasts in Canada for the next year forecast a positive rate of growth.

I have indicated that I am considering bringing in a new budget early in the new year, before the beginning of the fiscal year. I certainly intend to proceed with that plan, but I stress to the Hon. Member that no budget by itself could radically change the situation which we are experiencing at the present time, not only in Canada but in most industrialized countries. This will have to take place as part of a broad policy, not only in Canada but in other countries, involving not only budgetary policies but all other elements of the economy.

MACDONALD ROYAL COMMISSION—CHAIRMAN'S  
REMUNERATION

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, again my question is directed to the Minister of Finance who stated that perhaps forecasts will not become reality. Let us deal with reality, because OECD deals with reality and points out that in real gross national product terms Canada had a negative, a minus 5 per cent reduction last year, even behind Turkey, for example, which had a better record; in fact Canada had the worst record of any OECD country—24 out of 24. In view of the fact that that is costing every worker in Canada \$100 a month in current dollars, would the Minister of Finance indicate, first, what is the depression proof wage level being offered to Donald Macdonald to head his commission? Is it \$800 a day? Second, would the Minister of Finance at least ask that commission to commence its activity at the earliest opportunity with a view to its advising the Minister on what course he should take to avert a still worse calamity in this country than is developing, and as to what he should do?

• (1420)

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, Royal Commissions do not come under my responsibility. The Hon. Member's question in that regard should be addressed to the Minister responsible for the Privy Council Office, namely, the Prime Minister.

As far as the Hon. Member's second point is concerned, the commission has been set up. Meetings have been held already. Last week Mr. Macdonald met with provincial Ministers and myself at the conclusion of the federal-provincial conference and there was a very helpful and fruitful exchange of views

with regard to the activities of the commission. I understand the commission is still in its organization stage. It is planning to proceed expeditiously with its plans of action, but again I think it would be raising false expectations and hopes to believe that this commission could come forth with recommendations for action in the next few months. That is the responsibility of the federal and provincial Governments of this country together with people in the private sector, both labour and management. That responsibility we are ready to assume. We have assumed it up to now, and we will continue to take the responsibility for it.

PURPOSE OF PRIME MINISTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO FAR  
EAST

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. No doubt the Prime Minister is familiar with the OECD report to which I have referred, which lists his country, Canada, as number 24 out of 24 in terms of 1982 performance. Will the Prime Minister indicate why he feels that now is the time for him to take still another trip? In what way will that trip help the unemployed of this country?

Statistics Canada's figures issued this morning show that some of our industrial sectors are operating at only 51 per cent capacity and, on average, are operating at only 67 per cent. The OECD report has indicated that our downturn has been due to the postponement or cancellation in part of major energy projects in Canada. In that context, would the Prime Minister indicate how he might be able to do more to help the unemployed than by taking another trip?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, the question is somewhat involved and speculative. I am sure if I did not take a trip I might be able to do a great deal—that is the suggestion by the Hon. Member—in helping the economy. I am glad to see him recognize the earnestness with which I apply myself to that task when I am in the country.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trudeau:** As to whether what I do week after week is more than I will be doing when I go to the ASEAN countries and Japan, Madam Speaker, is a matter entirely for speculation. I cannot satisfy the Hon. Member on that, but I would want to point out to him that the ASEAN countries have been growing over the past several years at a rate of about 6 per cent. Trade with the Pacific Rim countries has now overtaken trade by Canada with Europe. If the Hon. Member were at all informed about the reality of the economic development of those countries and the potential markets for Canada, I am sure he himself would be suggesting that I make the trip a little longer so that I could spend more time with the businessmen who have asked me to meet them there to discuss Canada's trade relations with those countries.