

Oral Questions

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, the question is under review. When we are ready, we will make a relevant announcement.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. It is incredible that the government, which is spending some \$8 billion on health programs and health care in 1981-82, should only spend some \$10 million on the evaluation of health services. The Medical Research Council received an increase of 22 per cent, and I congratulate the minister and the government for that move. Surely the NHRDP program is an integral part of that and the two must work together on research. Again I should like to ask the minister when will she inform the scientific community that the funding for this important and much needed program will be increased?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member has said, the estimates for scientific medical research have just been increased by 22 per cent.

[*English*]

The budget on the other hand of the NHRDP program, which is another program of medical research, is, as I said, under review. I will be announcing tomorrow the exact budget for it. The hon. member may be interested to read the clippings and the press release that I will send to his office as usual. We have lots of complex dossiers and we do our fights one at a time.

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REGULATORY REFORM

ECONOMIC COUNCIL REPORT

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, I should like to put my question to the Prime Minister. We heard the Minister of Finance say that the answer to much of the economic dilemma we face in this country today lies in greater productivity. I think that pretty well all the members of the House would agree with that statement. We have the Economic Council report on reforming regulations, which shows that our productivity can be substantially improved by reducing the burden on those producing goods and services. Yet on the eve of this report we read about discussions that have taken place at Meach Lake to the effect that the same high level of ministerial involvement can be expected as we have had in the energy program. Do we infer then, Madam Speaker, that the government is rejecting the Economic Council report on regulation reform, and are we to expect more government structuring and intervention in our economy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, in reply to a previous question I indicated that the

hon. member's information on the Meach Lake meeting is completely fanciful and fabricated.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss MacDonald: It is from Lalonde.

Mr. Clark: Lalonde was wrong again.

Mr. Trudeau: I regret that the hon. member has been misinformed.

Mr. Clark: You cannot believe a thing Lalonde says.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, the information I have comes from the official Liberal organ, the *Toronto Star*, or the *Trudeau Star*. In light of the Prime Minister's reply would he clear up some of the confusion that remains in government policy toward the important subject of productivity? For instance, according to a headline in the *Vancouver Province* in December, 1975, the Prime Minister said there was "no way that the free market system can be made to work now or when the anti-inflation program ends."

On the Prime Minister's return from the Bonn Summit he said:

We will remove the intrusions of many government policies and regulations from individuals and businesses; in some cases this will mean returning functions to the private sector, in others it will mean removing the heavy hand of government and its drag on personal initiatives.

The situation in the country is serious. It is time the Prime Minister—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please. It is high time for the question too.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think the speech that the hon. member refers to, in 1975, indicated that the free market system is not perfect and that indeed some regulation of it is required. That is precisely the position being put forward today by members of his own party when they were enjoining the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to get along with his competition policy so that we could ensure that the monopolistic powers which exercise control over the economy are somewhat regulated through an anti-combines policy—

Mr. Clark: Will it affect Jack Austin?

Mr. Trudeau: —to prevent that control of the economy by the private sector where the free market system does not operate.