

THE ECONOMY

REQUEST FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PLANS

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. There are millions of Canadians who are suffering under severe economic pressures, but we are told that nothing in the way of a new initiative of an economic nature will be taken by the government until after the Versailles Conference. Surely the government has contingency plans in place in the event that some of the actions that it intends to take at that conference are not supported by other international governments. Why does the government today not announce what it plans to do within the framework of its power so that Canadians, as soon as possible, can see some hope and expectation for the future?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member's question is very general indeed, and I am at a loss, because of its general character, to respond to it with my usual specific answers.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wilson: Back to the drawing board, Allan.

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, we are attending the economic Summit at Versailles and we will be discussing the world economic situation with other Summit members. If, as a result of that meeting, further initiatives should be taken, then, of course, the government would announce them.

Mr. Huntington: Retired before you start.

Mr. MacEachen: I am not quite prepared to admit to the hon. member that we are just waiting for the Summit, in that case.

Mr. Paproski: Maybe you should go to Fatima, never mind Versailles.

Mr. MacEachen: Where?

Mr. Trudeau: You are the guy who should go to Fatima.

POSITION OF MINISTERIAL ADVISERS

Mr. John Gamble (York North): The reason the question is general, Madam Speaker, is because the problem is general, brought about by general misadministration by the government. The one thing the people do not have is hope and expectation for the future, because there has not been one sign of something—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has been allowed to ask a supplementary question. The first question should obviously be short, but the supplementary should be even shorter.

Mr. Gamble: The best news that could be given, Madam Speaker, would be the resignation of the minister. In default of

Oral Questions

that—and I am sure he will not give us that kind of good news—will the minister at least announce that the general incompetents, those people within his department who brought about that calamity on November 12, have been replaced by people who have some expectation of a bright future for Canadians?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): I think, Madam Speaker, that the hon. member has a very simple attitude toward the current economic situation. If it were simply a question of bad policies in Canada and bad officials and a bad minister in Canada—

Mr. Jarvis: Mostly the minister!

Mr. MacEachen:—then I would wonder why the unemployment level in the United States is about the same as it is in Canada. I would wonder why the unemployment levels in the OECD area are increasing and are projected to increase, why inflation is a problem in almost every industrialized country—

Mr. Huntington: Why can we not have energy self-sufficiency?

Mr. MacEachen:—and why the recession exists all over the world. Surely the power of the Minister of Finance and his officials is not great enough to bring about such economic chaos in every part of the world.

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AVIATION INDUSTRY

COST OF CANCELLED CHALLENGER AIRCRAFT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, who might recall that on February 11 I asked him the following question:

Could he inform the House how much research and development money and other funds went into the stretched version of the Challenger jet before the project was cancelled with a loss of some \$500 million worth of orders?

The minister replied that he would “be happy to obtain that information and provide it to my hon. friend as soon as possible.” Well, his “hon. friend” has been waiting for three and a half months, and I would like him to narrow the date down a bit.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I apologize for not having provided the information to him by now. I will try my best to have it for him by the end of the week.

DEBT STATUS OF CANADAIR

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Perhaps while the minister is getting that information for me by the end of the