

Oral Questions

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, there speaks the voice of the Liberal Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Never mind consultations, never mind treating the people of this country in a decent and straightforward manner. Never mind any of this. We saw 15 years of government when a Liberal Government ignored the people of this country. We do not intend to follow that route.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC WORKS

OLD PORT OF QUEBEC—COMPOSITION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Public Works and his parliamentary secretary, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Recently the Minister of Public Works announced the membership of the Conseil d'administration du Vieux-Port de Québec. None of these new members came from labour circles or community groups. Could the Minister inform the House whether this lack of community representation was accidental or planned?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if I am not mistaken, many of these appointments are made according to certain criteria applied by our ports, chambers of commerce, and so forth. I am not acquainted with the exact conditions, but I will ask the Minister about this to set the Hon. Member's mind at rest.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

Once the Prime Minister has consulted with his Minister of Public Works about the lack of community representation, could he give the House the assurance that he will appoint representatives of the labour movement and community groups, to the board of directors so that the board reflects a cross-section of the population of Quebec City?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, in all appointments we want to strive as far as possible towards the kind of representativity referred to by the Hon. Member, something we are very much in favour of. In fact, we want to try to achieve this at all times.

• (1150)

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

TREATMENT OF SEVERANCE PAY AND PENSIONS

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I have committed myself to meet next week in my constituency with two groups of union members who are interested in the proposed changes to the unemployment insurance regulations. Could the Minister now tell us specifically how she intends to proceed with respect to the treatment of severance pay and pensions?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when the changes to the unemployment insurance regulations were announced at the time of the economic statement, I undertook to listen to representations from Members of Parliament and to consult with labour and business about the implementation of these measures. I can tell the Hon. Member, and Members of Parliament, whose representations I have appreciated, that with regard to separation pay the changes in regulations will not affect any collective agreements which have been negotiated and signed prior to the end of December, 1984. In other words, the claims will be treated under those agreements according to the present regulations.

I would also say, with regard to pensions, that we have decided—and again this decision came after consultation—that a year of transition is the best approach. Those provisions will come into effect as of the first of January, 1986.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

REPORTED DISMISSALS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Reports in the media have documented several cases of public servants being fired on the basis of their past political affiliations. During the election campaign the Prime Minister promised that there would be no hit list or purge in the Public Service of Canada. The Prime Minister said that he believed in a competent and impartial Public Service.

In view of the disturbing reports, which are seriously documented by Southam Press today in the *Ottawa Citizen*, there appear to be in contravention—

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the Hon. Member to come to his question, please.

Mr. Gauthier: These firings appear to be in contravention of the Public Service Employment Act. Can the Prime Minister tell the House why the Act is not being applied?