

Oral Questions

Mr. Trudeau: That means increasing massively our borrowing, and at this particular time the government has judged—

An hon. Member: It is a good investment.

● (1430)

Mr. Trudeau: I can understand—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Double-tracking first!

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I think this is turning into a debate. If hon. members want to ask supplementary questions, I will attempt to answer them.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**MEASURES TO ASSIST HOME OWNERS—POLICY ON MORTGAGE TAX CREDIT**

Mr. Gordon Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Madam Speaker, may I direct my question to the right hon. Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister of Finance? Four months ago today, the public of Canada elected this government and we have been looking forward to the announcement of policies for stimulating the economy, to create jobs, to provide aid to alleviate cost of living problems besetting wage earners and to provide help to home owners faced with the loss of homes as a result of high mortgage rates.

We wanted to know what this government could contribute to the renewed health of this rich but bureaucratically-strangled nation. What we did not want was the formal announcement by the Minister of Finance, yesterday, of a recession for Canada.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Is the hon. member going to put his question now?

Mr. Gilchrist: Will the Prime Minister now admit that the Conservative plan to help home owners and prospective home owners by a mortgage tax credit was the kind of action needed, and will he respond positively—

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Gilchrist: —to the Ontario government's offer of \$500, matched by a federal \$500 to mortgage holders hard-pressed to keep their homes?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is suggesting that the government should stimulate the economy. Through hearing the Minister of Finance yesterday, I would remind the House that in this

very year the government is stimulating the economy to the extent of a \$14 billion deficit. That is stimulus indeed.

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EMPLOYMENT**PROGRAMS TO REDUCE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT**

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Statistics Canada tell us today that unemployment is 7.8 per cent. Perhaps a more human way of saying that is that about 900,000 of our fellow Canadians are looking for work, without success. I think it is the highest rate in the industrialized western world.

My question is this: how will the minister's \$137 million plan seriously help Canadians looking for work in this fiscal year? If it will not help, what plans does the minister have to change the proposed plan?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, to begin with, the unemployment rate, which gives us all a good deal of concern, is not one that is solely an experience of this country. It is something that is affecting all industrialized countries, because we are dealing with the same conditions such as inflationary prices of oil and energy around the world. Downturns in economic growth are being faced by every country. I would point out to the hon. member that in the last report in the United States the unemployment rate exceeded substantially the rate we are experiencing in Canada, and we are obviously affected by that.

As far as how our programs will affect the situation, the programs speak for themselves. Those employment-creation programs announced June 2 are designed to try to provide job opportunities for tens of thousands of Canadians who will be entering the workplace this summer and fall. The program is being targeted particularly on those who have most difficulty in the workplace. We are using our scarce resources to help those most in need. That is a commitment of this government.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, the minister said in a press conference on April 24:

I believe that, as far as possible, employment programs should do more than just create employment. They should also seek to further other government objectives.

In light of the changing scene in the economy, would the minister now tell us what other government objectives he had in mind?

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, that statement referred to the fact that we wanted to use our employment programs to help other objectives such as energy conservation, the promotion of additional research and development, the promotion of better access to the workplace for women and native people. Again, the programs that we put forward and announced are designed to do exactly that.