

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, while not having had an opportunity to study the report in detail, there is one thing that was drawn to my attention. That is the fact that the Economic Council is projecting real growth to reach 4.2 per cent in 1992 and 5.1 per cent in 1993. That compares with our projections of 3.2 per cent in 1992 and 4.1 per cent in 1993. They are considerably more optimistic on the growth front than we are. They are also more optimistic on the employment opportunities as well.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that clearly indicates that we are following a course of sustained durable recovery with price stability.

I am really surprised that the hon. member is so much against inflation. I thought that the NDP were the champions of the under dog, the senior citizens, the people on fixed incomes. It is runaway inflation that erodes the income base of senior citizens and low income people. They should be applauding our efforts.

With respect to transfer payments, when this government came into office, it transferred to the provinces in 1984-85 \$25.6 billion. In 1992-93, in the next fiscal year, we will be transferring \$38.1 billion, an increase of \$12.5 billion or almost 50 per cent.

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ADVERTISING

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday the government launched its so-called prosperity and learning initiative in the House of Commons. Two ministers stood in the House and briefed Parliament and subsequently briefed the press in a press conference and answered questions about the reported \$15 million program.

I want to ask the Prime Minister this. Why did both those ministers, the minister of trade and the minister of employment, withhold information about an additional \$4.5 million advertising program to be jointly funded by both their ministries, 50-50, and to be launched in the next few weeks, and an advertising blitz called "Yes We Can"? Why were Canadians not given all the information yesterday?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I believe at that press conference and certainly on other occasions yesterday I talked quite openly about advertising. I did say that there would be an advertising program. It would be financed in part from the secretariat, \$500,000 from the secretariat, but in part from the budgets of other government departments.

It is those other government departments which have other advertising programs in government and will be doing so under the broad umbrella of the "Yes We Can" theme, the competitiveness theme.

• (1430)

It is not incremental spending in that sense. I have been quite open about it and I will continue to be open about it.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should note that the program has grown from \$15 million to \$20 million in 24 hours.

I want to ask the minister another question. It was clear yesterday in the briefing with the senior official involved, Mr. Tony Eyton, that an unspecified amount of money is also going to be spent on consultants and to pay for studies.

The estimate given yesterday was \$5 million for that program. Will the minister now confirm that yesterday's initiative is not \$15 million, but with the \$5 million he just admitted and with another \$5 million in his new spirit of openness—I expect him to admit this—the total program is \$25 million.

Rather than listening to Canadians, \$15 million is going to be spent on a communications and advertising blitz. How can you say you are listening when you are dumping a barrage of propaganda on the heads of Canadians?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think my hon. friend was told this morning by members of the secretariat that \$5 million which he has just concluded now is going to be an advertising blitz is nothing like an advertising blitz.

It is moneys that will be spent on consultants, on printing and distribution, toll free telephone information services and things that are related to serving the consultation process on a community basis.