

Oral Questions

—a shameful willingness to accept unemployment and economic weakness in this country on the part of the Conservative Government.

I would describe what the Prime Minister is saying today, and what the Minister of Finance said yesterday, as an outrageous copout and an outrageous betrayal of the unemployed. We have now doomed this generation to be a lost generation without any hope of obtaining jobs.

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Can the Prime Minister tell the House if it is the policy of the Government that full economic recovery means full employment which, in the estimation of the Government, is an unemployment rate of 8 per cent? Is that the view of the Government? If it is, the people of Canada find it totally unacceptable.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member misquoted me when he said I would leave it to other. I was telling members of the press who were asking me the same question as the Hon. Member that they could worry about what was going to happen in seven or eight years from now and whether it would happen in any particular way, and that we were concerned with the current situation which is certainly a very difficult time for many, many Canadians.

We have presented a budget which is before the House. I find it typical of the Opposition that, not being able to deal with the budget or criticize it constructively, they are worrying about seven or eight years down the road. They should cooperate with getting this budget through; they should cooperate in improving it, if possible, and they should make the situation for Canadians here and now as good as is possible. Then we can start worrying about the longer term figures.

The budget itself has taken measures to ensure that over the medium term the deficit would be coming down and that Canadians would be able to compete more efficiently with other countries because in the next 18 months they would be putting a lot of expenditure into building our infrastructure. That is the position of the Government. I think the Hon. Member's constituents would be more satisfied if he showed himself a little more exercised about the present and stopped speculating about what happens seven or eight years down the road.

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, I am not speculating; I am quoting from the Economic Strategy of this Government contained in the budget that the Minister of Finance brought down in the House a few days ago.

● (1120)

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT—REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER RESIGN

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): I would refer the Prime Minister to page 38 of the Government's Fiscal Plan which shows projections well into 1987 of over one million people unemployed. That means that five years after the

Government's economic recovery plan, we will still have one million people unemployed.

Even with the Government's projected rate of recovery, unacceptable as it is, the Prime Minister knows that the last to be hired in economic recovery are young people, and today we have 600,000 young people unemployed, soon to be joined by another 300,000 graduates from our universities and post-secondary institutions. They have no hope for jobs because all we get from the budget is a possibility of 27,000 new jobs this year for young people. Is it the Prime Minister's view—because the young people are looking for an answer—that this country, blessed as it is, cannot provide opportunity for our young people coming onto the job market, because, if that is his view, why in the name of God does he not resign?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I do not think God has much to do with my decision to resign, and I do not know why the Hon. Member is using profanities in the House.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

PURPOSE OF LAY-OFFS—UNION DESCRIPTION

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence but also involves the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It relates to their job-creation program in the Department of National Defence. On several occasions, Madam Speaker, both Ministers have denied the charge that the Department of National Defence has dismissed 1,027 employees in order to hire 3,000 people under the NEED Program. The Ministers say they are different jobs, but the Union of National Defence Employees, and others, say the jobs are exactly the same in many cases.

What I would like to know, and I believe what all Hon. Members want to know, is who is telling the truth? Is it the Executive Vice-President of the Union of National Defence Employees, who says that employees are being dismissed so that new ones can be hired in the name of job creation? Is he telling the truth, or are the Ministers telling the truth? If the executive Vice-President of the Union of National Defence Employees' association is not telling the truth, will the Minister kindly explain what is happening and why is there this horrible misunderstanding which is affecting hundreds of Government employees?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I believe yesterday I answered a question on what the Department is doing about job creation. As far as the matter related by the Hon. Member is concerned, I would like to say that the union has made no formal representations to me with respect to any perceived conflict with employees hired through the NEED Program. The persons referred to are employees who are term employees, employees who would have happened to be terminated at a certain point in time