

Mr. Cossitt was an outspoken Member of Parliament, as we all know, and a man with a genuinely independent spirit. At all times, whether one agreed with him or not, he fought hard for what he believed in. That is perhaps the prime obligation of all members of this House. We send our deepest feelings of sympathy to all members of Mr. Cossitt's family.

Madam Speaker: I have already sent a message to the widow of the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville (Mr. Cossitt) and to his family expressing the grief of the House over the sad news of the death of one of our colleagues. I would like the House to rise now and observe a minute of silence in his memory.

[Whereupon the House stood in silence for one minute.]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FINANCE

THE BUDGET—DESCRIPTION GIVEN BY SOLICITOR GENERAL

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is for the acting Prime Minister. He will know that the Solicitor General has publicly described the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance as being a "political disaster" and "seriously flawed". Will the acting Prime Minister tell us whether the Solicitor General will be resigning or whether the Minister of Finance will be resigning?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I must thank the right hon. Leader of the Opposition for bringing me back into the limelight after the obscurity of the last several weeks.

Mr. Nielsen: You are still obscure.

Mr. Nowlan: It was well deserved obscurity.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: The fact of the matter is that there is absolutely no reason in present circumstances for the Solicitor General to resign.

Mr. Nielsen: You can.

Mr. MacEachen: As for myself, I am sure the Canadian people would find it very unacceptable if I tendered my resignation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: Yesterday was St. Patrick's Day.

Mr. Clark: That is a matter on which the people of Canada would be delighted to be heard, Madam Speaker.

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE ECONOMY

POSITION OF NEW ENTRANTS INTO LABOUR FORCE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, might I now deal with the budget of the Minister of Finance? The minister accepts the description of his colleague that it is a seriously flawed budget—he must, or he would have insisted on his colleague's resignation.

The minister will know that there are now 169,000 fewer jobs in Canada than there were a year ago, that is, people who held jobs and who have lost them. The minister will also know that normally in a year some 300,000 people enter the labour force for the first time, women, students and others. Therefore, will the Minister of Finance tell us what he intends to do to ensure that these new entrants into the labour force, people who want to find jobs and build security for themselves, will find jobs in an economy that is already rushing backwards?

• (1425)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is quite right in pointing to the difficulties presently being experienced in the economy. There is a very high rate of unemployment, and weakness in the economy's output. I believe the surest way to create jobs and resume growth is to provide the basis for a sustained recovery in the economy, which is the purpose of the posture we have adopted in the way of an anti-inflationary stance in order to create the conditions for growth and greater job development in the economy.

In the meantime, in order to help as much as we can within the over-all fiscal framework, we have established very substantial job-creation programs. Just last week the Minister of Employment and Immigration announced additional funding for training, particularly among the youth of the country, and advanced additional sums for summer employment of students. These are the specific steps we think most appropriate in the present circumstances to meet the problem of unemployment.

INQUIRY RESPECTING POSSIBLE CHANGES IN BUDGET

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Immigration has advanced the program to where it was last year. He is training people for jobs which will not exist because this government has brought in a budget which is driving investment and jobs out of the country, and depriving Canadians of the opportunity to build a future in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!