

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister this question? Isn't it correct that what the Prime Minister is saying to the country and, in particular, to the 4,000 workers is that as far as he is concerned their jobs are gone and that compensation is good enough for this Government, instead of protecting the jobs in the shake and shingle industry? That is what he is saying to the country.

● (1430)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am saying the opposite. I am saying that the Liberal Party hopes those jobs are gone—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nunziata: Oh, come on.

Mr. Mulroney: That is what you are hoping for.

Some Hon. Members: Come off it.

Mr. Mulroney: That is all the Liberal Party is hoping for. The Liberal Party is hoping to trade on the hardship of other people.

Mr. Tobin: You wouldn't know the truth if it jumped up and bit you on the nose.

Mr. Mulroney: We are taking a mature, responsible position designed to save those jobs in British Columbia—

Mr. Tobin: The truth is a foreign concept to you.

Mr. Mulroney: —and to strengthen access to those markets.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nunziata: You're an absolute fraud.

Mr. Gauthier: He sure is.

Mr. Nystrom: Pinocchio.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for Skeena.

UNION POSITION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I want him to address it very directly and very carefully. I just met with representatives of the IWA and the shake and shingle industry as well. They made it very clear to us at the beginning of the meeting that they reject, wholly and totally, the Government's proposal in relation to compensation. Our Leader has been ejected over this.

Would the Prime Minister make this clear. Is he telling the people of Canada in the shake and shingle industry that when they met with him they said that they wholly and totally supported the Government's proposal on compensation?

Oral Questions

Mr. Epp (Provencher): He never said that.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will tell my hon. friend the exact same thing I told his Leader. I made no such comment. I indicated that the meeting began in a very co-operative and supportive manner. The unions and the industry indicated support for what the Government of Canada had done. At no time did I suggest that this implied support for every action that the Government of Canada had taken or would contemplate. That is what I told the Hon. Leader of the NDP and that is what I repeat to this Member.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, the only proposal that the Government has forward right now is on compensation. Would the Prime Minister get up and tell the shake and shingle industry and the IWA what part of the Government's position they support? He has not had the guts to phone President Reagan and tell him to get that off the table.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Right on.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I know that this will offend the NDP, but it was a constructive meeting at which people got along.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Representatives of labour, management, and Government sat down in a mature and thoughtful manner and tried to work out a solution to the problems of British Columbia. No one harangued anyone else, no one cast aspersions, and no one cast blame on people. We were looking for a solution. It was a very co-operative effort undertaken by all involved.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, let me try my luck at getting the truth this afternoon. My question is directed to the Prime Minister and is on the same issue. What has changed since last Friday that the Government is now prepared to accept the loss of this industry and 4,000 jobs when, only a few days ago, the Government was demanding a complete reversal? Why the flip-flop?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed our mind, nothing that precludes action by any reasonable Government on a number of fronts in a matter this complicated. This is a very serious matter in which people's jobs and futures are involved. Comprehensive negotiations are under way. Retaliatory pressure and protectionist measures exist in the United States. It is not an easy matter to resolve. However, we are working