

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out to the Right Hon. Member, first that the Leader of the Opposition quoted the wrong figures: too many Canadians will be threatened, but definitely not 4,000 will be affected.

Second, the action we took as a Government was the response of the Prime Minister here in the House; second, with the Americans we have explored the possibility of compensation; third, our senior officials and myself have had direct exchanges with the American Secretary of State to consider all available options; fourth, the measures announced in the House yesterday by the Minister of Finance.

As I said earlier during Oral Questions Period, we and the Americans are now considering any other possible alternatives.

[English]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The figure of 4,000 jobs is the best number given to us by the Council of Forest Industries of British Columbia. If the shakes and shingles situation widens into general countervailing action against the entire Canadian industry there will be thousands and thousands of more jobs lost.

COMMUNICATION FROM UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. He proudly displayed his telex and letter to the President of the United States concerning the issue of shakes and shingles. Apparently he received a reply. Would he be willing to table that letter from the President?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. I have received a private reply from the President, as we have received from other heads of Government, dealing with that matter and others. As my right hon. friend knows as a former Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, that would be inappropriate.

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NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

RIDEAU HALL—PUBLIC'S ACCESS TO GROUNDS

Mr. Barry Turner (Ottawa—Carleton): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Public Works. For all intents and purposes the gates of Rideau Hall were recently closed to the people of Canada by the National Capital Commission, an act with which I totally disagree. Was this decision initiated by the RCMP for security reasons? If so, will the gates be reopened to the people of our country?

[Translation]

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Public Works): First of all, Mr. Speaker, the decision was not made by the RCMP. Second, this comes under the National Capital Commission

which did nothing more than standardize our practice with respect to official residences. There are several official residences. Third, it has also been guaranteed that, on very special occasions, visitors would still be able to gain access to Rideau Hall grounds.

Were it possible to go even further and make it easier still to visit the Governor General's residence, I would be the first to support such a measure.

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[English]

CANADIAN JOBS STRATEGY

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Opposition Members of Parliament have been trying for some time, without success, to get some detailed and solid information on the Canadian Jobs Strategy. Will the Minister now confirm that at least two memos have been sent by her officials, in effect imposing a gag order on information pertaining to that program? Can she tell the House why the public, the media, and Members of Parliament cannot have access to detailed information on that program?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to tell the Hon. Member about the Canadian Jobs Strategy. This year we have already spent some \$450 million under that program. That involves the participation of some 50,000 individuals. The programs are ongoing. I have had an opportunity to visit many projects across the country, whether under the Job Development Program or under the new Community Futures Program. All of them are in operation and I would be delighted to give the Hon. Member any amount of detail he wants.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nystrom: Oh, boy, these recorded messages.

DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister then explain why a memo was sent on May 15, and I have a copy of the text here, explaining that MPs can have some information but, depending on the nature of the request, Public Affairs regionally will be contacted to confirm that this information is in the public knowledge. Can the Minister say why there is a gag order, and also explain why Members opposite campaigned for open government back in September, 1984, but now all of a sudden we have this secrecy?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do not know any Department