

of Finance. When the unemployment figures came out last month, the Minister of Finance said he was not concerned about seasonally adjusted Canadians out of work, but only about actual Canadians. The latest figures show that, although the total working force is smaller, the number of what the finance minister calls "real Canadians" out of work has increased by 28,000 over the past month.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister why the government is accepting this so easily, or are 28,000 Canadians too "squeezily-measly", to use the term of the Minister of Finance, to merit the government's real concern?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we are very much concerned about the number of actual Canadians who are out of work, and we will be indicating in the budget tonight another major step taken by this government to bring a sense of confidence to the Canadian economy so we can get Canada back on a growth track.

● (1425)

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister was leader of the opposition he said that the way to get the country on a growth track was to have a stimulative deficit or, in other words, a larger deficit. Now the Minister of Finance is saying that the only deficit appropriate for Canada is a reduced one. Can the Prime Minister provide projections today on how many more real Canadians will be stimulated out of work within the next year by Conservative action or, more likely, non-action?

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, in distinct contrast to the practices followed by the former government when the hon. member was a bit player in that government, we intend to publish tonight significant forecasts as to the nature of economic performance in the country, and we intend to indicate our expectations of the impact the new policies indicated in the budget will have upon those projections.

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#### PETRO-CANADA

##### RETENTION OF CORPORATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH MEXICO

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Outremont):** Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have addressed my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources or, in his absence, to the acting Minister of Energy, but in his absence and the absence of no less than ten other ministers, I will address it to the Prime Minister.

**An hon. Member:** He's a real sweetheart.

#### Oral Questions

**Mr. Lalonde:** In light of the statement made in Toronto yesterday by the Mexican ambassador to Canada, to the effect that Mexico would prefer to deal with Petro-Canada in its future sales of oil to our country, can the Prime Minister tell us whether his government will finally come to its senses on the question of Petro-Canada, abandon its plans to castrate that corporation and use it fully as the government's instrument to negotiate with Mexico, or will the government again prefer to send the president of Imperial Oil on such matters, as it did last summer?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, it has been made abundantly clear in discussions with the Mexicans and, indeed, the Venezuelans that Petro-Canada is not essential as an instrument of negotiation in relation to oil between Canada and those countries. Instead of sending representatives of Crown corporations or private corporations, we intend to send the ministers of the Crown to Mexico and Venezuela in January to carry on negotiations which are close to being concluded in a way that will bring to Canada access to Mexican and Venezuelan oil supplies that eluded the former government.

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[Translation]

#### ENERGY

##### MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED TO ENSURE SUPPLIES OF GAS AND HEATING OIL TO QUEBECKERS

**Mr. Pierre Bussières (Charlesbourg):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister surely knows, there has been a lockout at the Petrofina Canada Chemicals Ltd. refinery in eastern Montreal, which jeopardizes the supply of gasoline and heating oil in eastern Canada. I therefore want to know what action the government is considering today in order to truly ensure oil supplies for the people in Quebec, in light of the recent agreement?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member indicated, it is a lockout, a work stoppage which has caused this disruption. To date, the federal government has only stepped in to stress to all concerned the threat that this oil production stoppage poses to the Canadian people.

[English]

##### ELECTION PROMISE OF OIL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. Does he agree with the statement made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on December 6 before the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works, that the minister expected that imported oil into Canada would continue to be about 250,000 barrels a day in 1990, or roughly equivalent to what it is now, which amounts