

YEAR OF THE DISABLED

CALL FOR TRANSPORTATION AND SPECIAL HOUSING PROGRAMS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of great urgency under the provisions of Standing Order 43. In view of the fact that 1981, the Year of the Disabled, is fast approaching and the Government of Canada is delaying in getting its programs for the disabled under way, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday):

That the Minister of Transport act immediately on the program of transportation for the disabled which has been awaiting his decision since July, and that the Minister of Public Works responsible for housing proceed to amend regulations under the National Housing Act making it possible for non-government organizations to provide group homes and special housing for the physically and mentally disabled as a vital part of the movement toward independent living.

Madam Speaker: Presentation of this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

LAY-OFFS AND ECONOMIC INSECURITY—ALLEGED DOUBLE STANDARD—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Miss Jewett):

That the government be condemned for a grotesque double standard in its handling of the problem of lay-offs and economic insecurity, in that as a result of the politicization of the federal service, Michael Pitfield was laid off with severance pay of over \$100,000 on which he has, on his rehiring, paid back less than \$10,000, at the same time as hundreds of thousands of Canadians, including many federal employees, have been fired or laid off without their security rights being recognized in law or compensated by either their employers or the federal government.

Madam Speaker: Presentation of this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

PROJECTED INCREASE IN NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Oral Questions

The minister will know that on Monday of this week the Canadian Council on Social Development indicated that "the budget can only have a devastating impact on the standard of living of millions of disadvantaged Canadians". Also he will know that this morning, Leonard Shifrin, a social policy analyst in Ottawa, said that this budget is "socking it to the little guy". Finally, the minister will know that the root of the growing discontent with this budget lies in the fact that it is a projection for one million Canadians to be unemployed. I would like to ask the minister how he can justify an increase in the unemployment rolls next year of 150,000 Canadians, and what does he intend to do about it?

• (1415)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, no one is justifying additions to the unemployment rolls. As the hon. member well knows, the question of unemployment in this country is a product of a number of factors, many of which are beyond our control. Certainly developments in the international economy and the basic questions of oil prices are significant problems. I would draw to the attention of the hon. member that, contrary to the position taken by his government, which was to introduce severe cutbacks and restraints in government spending that would create further recession and more unemployment—higher than was predicted in our budget—we maintained a balance of our deficit and provided a high degree of economic stimulation through the incentives to the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Crombie: Madam Speaker, I think people are going to get very tired of hearing the government blame other people. I think what Canadians are looking for are some answers. In the past the minister has indicated that a program which involves \$350 million will solve the problems. He neatly forgets that that program, which he has touted as being able to solve the problems, amounts to about 12,000 person-years of employment. That is about 1 per cent of the projected unemployment rate. What I want to know is what new programs the minister has to offer to the other 99 per cent of Canadians who are going to be unemployed as a consequence of his colleague's budget.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, nobody has ever claimed that that particular program will solve the problem. It is simply a response to the problem. There is a great difference between the two. The hon. member might do well to recognize that it is not the only measure that has been taken to respond to the problem of unemployment. For example, when I took over this ministry I was required to reintroduce a number of direct job creation programs, which the hon. member, as a member of the previous government, had cancelled. In fact, those programs were the ones which hit most heavily in the areas of highest unemployment. We had to put people back to work as a result of the cancellation of those programs, which cancellation took work away from them.