

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Is the Hon. Member ready to ask a question? I am sorry, I heard a preamble at the beginning of her remarks and at the end I heard a question, and I am prepared to hear it again.

Mrs. Pépin: Does the Minister's reply mean that the new Government has changed course and from now on intends to restrict entry into Canada of refugees especially those from totalitarian countries since these are the people who are persecuted the most?

[English]

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, no, we have not changed our approach. These were the regulations that were laid down, particularly in the case of these six people, by my predecessor.

Mr. Nunziata: That is two apologies. Who is next?

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THE ECONOMY

ECONOMIC STATEMENT—IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister who will know that we have been trying for many days to obtain the direct job impact of his Government's program cuts and tax increases. I am forced once again today to raise that issue, based on his comments last night at the Toronto Insurance Conference black tie dinner where he said, "our economic analysis suggests that this program, from a quantitative viewpoint, does not impact negatively in terms of job creation in the country". Yet just two days ago his Minister of Finance stood in this House and said quite the contrary, that in 1986 there would be a marginal decrease in the number of jobs in the country as a result of the Government's policy. Would the Prime Minister explain who is it of the two who is really being straightforward with the House of Commons and the people of Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I recollect, the Minister of Finance was not at variance with me in his response. He said the matter was statistically insignificant. That is consistent with exactly what I have been saying. As you know, employment in the next fiscal year will increase. Interest rates dropped today almost a quarter of a point further, inflation is at 3.8 per cent, and consumer confidence as expressed by the Conference Board this morning is rising dramatically. Those are good signs.

ECONOMIC PROSPECTS—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister indicated in Toronto that quantitatively there would be no particular change, yet he is saying these things cannot be measured. I seek clarification from him. Is he saying that as a result of the program cuts the Government has made,

and the fact that taxes have been increased, we can expect more investment to occur in Canada, more growth in the economy, and more jobs created? Is that essentially what the Prime Minister is saying?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the old policies as articulated and defended by the alliance of Liberals and NDP over many years have resulted in abject failure. The new programs set out by the Minister of Finance, which are meeting with enthusiastic response across the country, will provide Canadians with the kinds of durable jobs on an ongoing basis that Canada requires. That is what we are saying.

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[Translation]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

YOUTH—BUDGETARY CUTS

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State.

At this very moment, while the Minister is sitting comfortably in his chair, nearly 1,000 students are waiting outside for an opportunity to express to the Government their concern about the budgetary cuts that will affect them. The House is aware that the Government intends to cut summer jobs, student loans and transfer payments for post-secondary education, and now nearly 1,000 students have been standing out in the cold, waiting to communicate a message to the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues. I therefore wish to ask the Minister how he can justify refusing to meet with Canadian citizens who want to express their concerns to the Government and, instead, choosing to ignore this demonstration by young people who want to have a say in the debate on their future.

[English]

Hon. Walter McLean (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the important question and the important issue he raises. I want to assure him that I take very seriously the situation of Canadian students. He may know that last week, when the Canadian Federation of Students was here lobbying all caucuses, along with the Hon. Minister for Employment and Immigration we met for an hour and a half to discuss the national concern for the Canada Student Loan Program and the funding concerns of Canadian universities. I assure the Hon. Member that I will be meeting with the provincial Ministers of Education in the near future, and I will be beginning the dialogue about the future of post-secondary education.