

Oral Questions

make statements. I invite the hon. member to do this and ask his question now.

Mr. Stevens: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Prime Minister indicate to the House what his actual target is in respect of unemployment in Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): As low a rate as possible, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED DEPRECIATION
ALLOWANCES FOR CORPORATIONS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance seeking clarification of an answer he gave yesterday to the hon. member for York South. Is it his intention to propose further increases in depreciation allowances in the corporate sector beyond the first six months of the present year, in terms of future budgetary policies of the government?

An hon. Member: They are as worried about this as you are.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will just have to wait and see.

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF DOCUMENTS ON WHICH
UNEMPLOYMENT FORECAST IN MAY, 1972, BUDGET
BASED

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. Will he give consideration to placing before the House the internal or working documents on which he based his forecast in respect of unemployment, particularly in the context of a budget that was dedicated to reducing unemployment significantly, before the new budget is presented on February 19 so we may have some idea of just what priority the government accords employment in the country?

Mr. Baldwin: Benson left some of his papers behind.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the problem here is, as I tried to explain to the House on another occasion—

Mr. Fairweather: We know all about the problem.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):—that we cannot look at individual targets separately. Our goals of full employment, growth and price stability are interrelated and, as the Economic Council of Canada pointed out in its ninth annual review, for the purpose of forecasting targets there has been too much emphasis placed on too few indicators. I say again to the House that targets cannot be stated with mathematical exactitude. The Canadian economy particularly is a vulnerable one, subject to world movement of trade and prices.

An hon. Member: Tell us on the 19th.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I am just suggesting—

An hon. Member: Bring back Benson.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the Leader of the Opposition for a last supplementary question on this subject for the time being and then go to the next matter. If we have time we will return to this subject which is obviously of interest to hon. members.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, in view of the answer just given by the Minister of Finance suggesting that unemployment and inflation are not all-important as priorities—I say all-important as priorities—

Mr. Sharp: You said that.

Mr. Stanfield:—and that other indicators ought to be upgraded, I should like to ask whether this means the minister has abandoned the statement he has made frequently that the creation of employment and the reduction of unemployment is his first goal?

• (1440)

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is again playing with words. Of course the provision of jobs is my number one priority and will remain so. But in terms of the setting of targets and looking at the statistical targets about which I was asked in the House, I accept the advice of the Economic Council of Canada that a number of interrelated targets, 14 or 15 in number, must be considered in order to get an over-all view of the economy. That does not mean in any way that I have abandoned the human priority I set, and the hon. gentleman knows it.

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GRAIN

PROVISION BY RAILWAYS OF SUFFICIENT CARS FOR
MOVEMENT—UPGRADING OF TRACKS NOT ABLE TO
BEAR WEIGHT OF HOPPER CARS

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. In view of the fact the government has purchased 2,000 grain hopper cars and put them at the disposal of the CPR and CNR and that in spite of this they are still not providing adequate service in some of the major shipping blocks and elevator and grain delivery points are congested, will the minister bring pressure to bear on the railroads to provide the adequate service we deserve?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, in terms of grain arriving at destinations for export, Vancouver and Thunder Bay, it is evident that the railways are in fact putting into service the equipment required to move the grain. There are, of course, individual points in the prairie region at this time of the year that are congested as a result of the rather rapid increase in quotas prior to freeze-up which the Wheat Board put into effect in order to offer the farmers an opportunity to deliver before they