

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1420)

Mr. Clark: The fact is that in the cheerful list of statistics cited by the Acting Prime Minister he neglected to tell parliament and the people of Canada that almost 40 per cent of our unemployed have been out of work now for more than three months. In light of that situation I will ask the Acting Prime Minister one last time whether the government of Canada will accept its responsibilities and begin to show the million Canadians who are out of work that their government cares about their plight and is prepared not simply to hope that budgetary measures, which we know will not work, will work, but instead will take action to create jobs now for Canadians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the exports I had in mind were Canadian merchandise exports which increased by 14 per cent in the first quarter of this year compared with the final quarter of last year.

An hon. Member: It was low last year.

Mr. MacEachen: That is a very positive feature. The hon. gentleman is aware that in this current fiscal year we are putting almost \$500 million toward direct job creation programs in the Canadian economy, which is an indication of the seriousness with which the government is dealing with the present situation.

POSSIBILITY OF REVISED BUDGET TO STIMULATE ECONOMY
AND PROVIDE JOBS

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, it is shocking to hear the Acting Prime Minister state that we have to wait for an upturn in the United States economy so that we can take advantage of it. In light of the fact that we are still in the midst of a national crisis in terms of high unemployment, will the minister tell this House whether the government is now prepared to bring in a revised budget to stimulate the economy and to restore confidence in its performance, thus meeting this tragedy by providing jobs?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question.

Mr. Alexander: I am very concerned about the answer the minister just gave to me because he did not answer the question. In light of the fact that we are faced with a national crisis and that the government only tinkered with the economy in the last budget, will the Acting Prime Minister now indicate to this House whether he is prepared to bring in a revised budget to stimulate the economy and restore confidence in its performance, thus meeting this tragedy by providing jobs?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question also.

[Mr. Clark.]

ENERGY

SUGGESTION PRIME MINISTER ASK UNITED STATES FOR MORE
TIME TO MAKE DECISION ON CONSTRUCTION OF NORTHERN
PIPELINE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. We have now learned that U.S. energy adviser Schlesinger has informed the minister that the United States does not regard Prudhoe Bay gas as being significant in terms of over-all American needs. Considering that President Carter can obtain a 90-day extension on reaching a pipeline decision, and in particular, following the recommendations and suggestions in the Berger Report regarding alternatives to investigate, will the minister urge the Prime Minister, when he returns to Canada, to reconsider his answers given earlier last week in the House and to go back to President Carter and inform him that the government of Canada needs more time to reach this fundamentally important decision on a northern pipeline?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that it would be helpful if, before making judgments and thinking out positions with respect to pipelines, hon. members opposite would await the report of the National Energy Board. When we have that report, we will be much better able to judge whether additional time is going to be needed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADEQUACY OF STUDY OF ALCAN ROUTE FOR PIPELINE—
SUGGESTED EXTENSION OF TIME

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, the minister misses the point. In light of Justice Berger's recommendations, which the minister praised so highly last night, that the Alcan route deserves more serious study—the report specifically referred to certain questions which ought to be more fully pursued—and in light of the ridiculously short time frame the Alcan study is now working with, does the minister agree that a three-month study is adequate to deal with the questions that are being considered with regard to the Alcan route? If he does not agree, why will he not agree to extend the time frame so that the job can be adequately done?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member has informed himself on the particular study to which he has referred. As my colleague the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has made quite clear, the situations are different—different in the sense that the Alcan study is associated with a corridor already in place, that is, the highway. The second point that I think he has made clear is that this would be a preliminary study and further work would be done upon receipt of it.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is going to follow the logic of the statement he has just made, surely when