

Oral Questions

the Prime Minister to keep the promises he made to textile workers in the Eastern Townships?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Member is ignoring the exceptional upsurge of employment in the Montreal area. The employment rate in Montreal is rising faster than in Quebec and Canada. Since we came to power about 51,000 jobs have been created in Montreal, and I am very proud of this performance. It is better than the Liberal Party's record.

SALE OF GULF REFINERY—GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF ISSUE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, these are very vague answers to specific questions.

Does the Minister of Employment and Immigration intend to convince the Prime Minister to provide a loan guarantee for the purchase of the Gulf refinery in Montreal East? Does the Minister intend to make her colleagues understand that it is entirely unfair to provide a billion-dollar tax exemption for the people who purchased Gulf, while at the same time refusing to allocate resources to help employees keep their jobs?

Does this mean everything for the big corporations and nothing for the worker?—

[English]

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Member seems to want to disparage what has been taking place in Montreal. In the last year some 51,000 new jobs have been created in Montreal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: What is more, the community of Montreal is confident that that kind of record will continue as it sees growth in the transportation sector, in the communications sector, and in other sectors throughout Montreal.

Mr. Ouellet: What a farce.

Miss MacDonald: The Leader of the Opposition would like to disparage that kind of growth, but he cannot ignore, Sir, that it is a fact.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT MINISTER RECALL PROMISES FOR PRIME MINISTER

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, that is no help to the workers in the company I just mentioned. I would like to ask a supplementary.

In Sherbrooke on July 26, 1984, the Prime Minister promised to maintain jobs in the textile and clothing industry in the Eastern Townships, in Quebec. Does the Minister intend to remind the Prime Minister to keep his promises, especially

when this morning, we were informed that Domtex will be closing down two of its plants three months from now?

[English]

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we have, indeed, been keeping our promises.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss MacDonald: We promised jobs. There have been more than 300,000 new jobs created in Canada since we came to office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Two hundred and fourteen thousand of those jobs have been full-time, Mr. Speaker, 70,000 part-time. When the Liberals served their last full year in office, full-time jobs decreased, not increased.

Mr. Gauthier: Three hundred and forty thousand, Flora.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT MONTREAL EAST BE DESIGNATED DEPRESSED AREA

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Yesterday in Montreal, a citizens' committee was set up to help save 5,000 jobs in Montreal East. Is the Minister willing to urge the Prime Minister to designate Montreal East as a depressed area, so that businesses and workers can take advantage of the benefits of programs for designated areas?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, since this Government came to power, the number of jobs in the oil industry has increased by more than 7 per cent, and we are working with the private sector to maintain this trend.

[English]

We will do that, as we have done it with various firms. We are working with the private sector. We are giving time to allow for various private sector offers to come forward. That has happened in the case of Gulf Canada. It has happened in the case of the textile industry. We will continue to work with the private sector to ensure that increase continues.

● (1420)

[Translation]

CITIZENS' COMMITTEE AND UNION CHAIRMEN—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is not answering the question. When 5,000 workers are about to lose their jobs, figures and statistics will not pay their grocery bills.