

gram. Oil prices abroad are going up. I read this afternoon in the newspaper that Venezuela is about to raise its price, so the people in eastern Canada will have to pay more for oil and it will cost the government more to compensate them. Although that is seen as an expenditure, in fact it is a transfer of payments, partly coming from the tax the United States pays on oil exported from Alberta and Saskatchewan.

I think this program will work and I am hoping that the people of Canada will accept it. Of course they are not happy about it and will want to be sure that everyone will be caught in the net. Following second reading debate the bill will go to committee, and if hon. members have some good suggestions to make, I am sure the minister will consider them.

● (1650)

I would like the people to understand that this program is in the best interests of our country. Inflation is probably a disease that hurts most the people in our society who can protect themselves the least. There are big groups both on the business and union sides who really have abused the situation lately at the expense of the rest of society. The Canadian economic pie has not grown in the last year, so when someone takes an extra piece of that pie—

An hon. Member: But it has grown.

Mr. Chrétien: It has not grown, if you compare the economic situation in Canada with that of our friends to the south who have been in a recession for 22 months. At least in Canada we have been able to maintain a much better performance than the United States.

An hon. Member: Not so.

Mr. Chrétien: For the first time in the history of relations between Canada and the United States, in terms of economic comparability, there was less unemployment last winter in Canada than there was in the United States. That was the first time ever.

An hon. Member: And 4 per cent more now.

Mr. Chrétien: Of course there is unemployment; I do not deny that. What I want to convey is that our performance has not been perfect, by far; but it has been quite good compared to that of the United States.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: I am glad you applaud both statements. Don't take one; take the two of them. I think we have to work together to make sure this program is a success, and if we succeed in making the program a reality, particularly in the minds of those people who set the trends in our society, I am confident that the economic growth in our society will accelerate and that our competitive position with other countries will be ameliorated so that the future of Canada will be even brighter than it is right now.

I am very glad to be here today to join in the invitation of my colleagues to hon. members across the aisle to do their part. We are a long way from the next election. We are not trying to win an election now, and will not be for three years. Right now, what we have to do is all pull in

one direction to make sure the future of this country will be greater than it is today.

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker, would the minister permit one question? In his speech, which I listened to very carefully, he asked for the immediate suggestions of hon. members. My question relates to the 1975-76 booklet on how our tax dollar is spent. There is an indication in this booklet that almost \$1 billion is available for consultants' fees. Would the minister consider cutting back on that tremendous amount being spent on consultants' fees, particularly in view of the large number of people presently employed in various departments of government?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to answer the question of the hon. member. There is a provision in the white paper through which I have asked every department to cut by 10 per cent the hiring of outside consultants. I should like to point out that although this is shown in those terms in the booklet, if you break down this \$1 billion you will find that the majority of it—I am speaking from memory—is for adult training programs in the provinces. We make the money available to the provinces to train the unemployed or those who want to upgrade their skills. It is spent in that sense of consultants' fees, rather than in the terms which the hon. gentleman has in mind. It is for those programs and for the teachers who give courses to the unemployed. I am happy to respond to the hon. member in that regard, and I think I am quite right.

An hon. Member: Most of it is under the Department of Transport.

Mr. Chrétien: I have ordered, in respect of the consultants' fees that the hon. member has in mind, a reduction of 10 per cent in dollar terms for next year.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave)—Veterans Affairs—Proposed Camp Hill complex at Halifax—Date of tender call; the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz)—Health—Possible revision of maximum levels for mercury chloride and PCB; the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall)—Fisheries—Possible discussion of extension of control over resources with United States.