

Oral Questions

Mr. Trudeau: I am sure the hon. member knows that I respect the judgment of the Minister of Finance and that he makes his own decisions.

Mr. Nystrom: A final supplementary. In view of the projected high unemployment rate and the massive deficit we have in manufactured goods in this country, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government intends to get tough and require firms to do more processing and manufacturing of raw materials in this country prior to export in order to create more jobs for Canadians?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member is restating his question. The policy of the government has already been announced.

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TRADE**SUGGESTION MINISTER VISIT OTHER COUNTRIES TO LEARN SUCCESSFUL TRADING PATTERNS**

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, obviously the tame seals are getting restless for a dive in the new pool at Sussex Drive. My question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the volume of exports of fully manufactured products, which are the ones which produce the jobs, has been declining steadily in the past 18 months and imports of the same products have been rising rapidly, showing that our chief trading partners are more adept exporters of products to Canada than we are at selling abroad and this has had an adverse effect on our employment, would the Prime Minister give serious consideration immediately after the Easter recess to having the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce visit the capitals of some of our more successful trading partners—

An hon. Member: And stay there.

Mr. Hees: —to study their trading patterns and bring them back to Canada which would have a tremendous effect on production and employment?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is agreement between the hon. member and the government view of these things or indeed the view of most responsible economists. If our exports are falling, it is because so many of the economies of our traditional markets, like the United States, are weakening and they are not in as strong a position to buy our goods as before. If imports are increasing, it is because Canadian society and the economy is very strong.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question arising from that very interesting answer. In view of the fact that imports from other countries of fully manufactured products are every day displacing a very large volume of Canadian products offered in the Canadian market, how does the Prime Minister conceive that our economy is so much more adept in producing goods at a reasonable price than other economies?

[Mr. Nystrom.]

Mr. Trudeau: Will the hon. member give me some examples, please?

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the Prime Minister take the time and trouble to look at the figures produced by Statistics Canada. Mr. Speaker, when one receives an answer like this it shows no regard for the employment and welfare of the Canadian people. Is it any wonder that the Prime Minister has found it necessary to have both of his limousines bullet-proofed?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. member that I do have high regard for the prosperity of the Canadian people and for the welfare of the hon. member. For that reason I suggest that he remove his head from the buttonhole of his shirt that he put it in this morning.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is a very entertaining exchange. There are other members, however, who should be called upon.

Mr. Hees: A question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. As a result of this last answer which I got from the Prime Minister, I should like to ask him if he is suffering severely from headaches from having his head in the sand so much of the time?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I might just borrow a moment from the question period which I will add on at the end. I want to remind hon. members that regardless of when we rise for the Easter break, there is an order of the House which will change the form of the question period. It will take effect upon the first Monday on our return after Easter. That order will have the effect, on an experimental basis, of having the question period begin forthwith after any motions pursuant to Standing Order 43. Question period will begin not later than 2.15 p.m. or earlier if there are no motions, or just a few, pursuant to Standing Order 43 and regardless of interruptions, points of order and questions of privilege, will terminate at three o'clock. Accordingly, one of the effects of the order covering the experiment will be that the question period will become a sort of self-policing thing in regard to interventions.

I wanted to make that known to hon. members now and to add that on the first Monday after our return at the end of the question period that day, at three o'clock, I would propose to put to the House the views I have collected from an examination of the precedents and the collective wisdom on the question period as a point of departure from which we might begin to come to an understanding about those guiding principles which should govern the question period. I hope to do it in such a way as to invite comment from hon. members, whether that comes through meetings of House leaders or of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization, which I am always happy to attend, or discussion in the House. It would seem that introduction of that new experimental order would be an opportunity to begin with a most comprehensive statement about the question period, to invite discussion and take it from there.