

Inquiries of the Ministry

the high rate of unemployment is causing such a heavy financial burden on the cities and provinces I wonder whether at the welfare conference or at a special conference of the premiers of Canada which would be called immediately the Acting Prime Minister would outline a policy and discuss with the premiers some financial assistance to the municipalities and provinces?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): The Prime Ministers of Canada will shortly be meeting here in Ottawa and I expect that they will raise these kinds of questions.

Mr. Woolliams: Yes, I think they will.

UNEMPLOYMENT—POSITION OF PROVINCES ON IMMEDIATE AMENDMENTS TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT—EARLIER INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): In light of the assurance given yesterday by the Minister of Labour that the federal government would bring to the attention of the provinces the need for immediate amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act regarding benefits for the hard-core and young unemployed, would the Acting Prime Minister undertake to keep the House fully informed on whether any provinces express opposition to emergency reform along these lines, and if so, which province or provinces?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I expect these problems will be aired and there will be an opportunity not only for the House but for the country as a whole to be aware of the representations of the provinces.

Mr. Alexander: If agreement with the provinces on this matter can be obtained, will the government introduce two specific emergency amendments regarding access and benefits for the hard-core and young unemployed this winter and spring rather than wait until July 1, 1971?

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Labour said yesterday, there is a timetable for the introduction of unemployment insurance legislation. This will be adhered to. I would remind hon. members that steps have already been taken to increase the benefits.

Mr. Alexander: So you do nothing for four months.

Mr. A. B. Douglas (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Could he indicate to the House whether the hammering and drilling we can hear back in this corner are an indication of the increased number of jobs being offered by the government in Ottawa?

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Acting Prime Minister. Would the government give consideration to increasing the salaries of its employees so that they will not have to be on welfare at the present time, as was reported on the news this morning over the CBC?

[Mr. Woolliams.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Egmont. I should point out that we will have to go on to the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands in a moment, but the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Egmont at this time.

UNEMPLOYMENT—RESPONSE TO REQUEST OF FEDERATION OF MAYORS AND MUNICIPALITIES FOR WINTER WORKS AND OTHER PROGRAMS

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Acting Prime Minister. In light of the conclusion reached following the survey conducted recently by the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities that federal programs are inadequate to solve urban unemployment, and their request for consultation to consider possible winter works programs, crash programs, etc., would the Acting Prime Minister indicate what response was made to the Association of Mayors and Municipalities on this important question?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer that question. However, I do want to say to the hon. member that I am sure he would agree that under our constitution it is not only legal but it is also a matter of government policy to discuss the position of the municipalities with the governments that have responsibility for them, namely, the provincial governments.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, in light of the Acting Prime Minister's response, would he ascertain whether there will be consultation with the provinces shortly on this important question, or whether in fact anyone in the ministry has received such a request, because apparently it was forwarded to the government a few days ago?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, as I said today and as was said by another hon. member from that side of the House, the ministers who are attending the Council of Welfare Ministers are raising these questions. They will be discussed. I can assure hon. members that no one has a greater concern for the problems of unemployment than the members on this side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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PUBLIC SERVICE

PROGRAM FOR HIRING OF FRANCOPHONE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES—MINISTERIAL AUTHORIZATION FOR MEMORANDUM—DISCIPLINARY ACTION RESPECTING CIRCULATION

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister arising out of the memorandum tabled by the