

Inquiries of the Ministry

with the Nova Scotia government on this matter, it will be done. However, for the time being, it is far too early even to call this a plan.

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POST OFFICE**POSSIBILITY OF CONVERTING DEPARTMENT INTO CROWN CORPORATION—REQUEST FOR REPORT**

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Postmaster General.

In a speech on June 2, 1971, the minister said that studies were under way on the conversion of the Post Office Department into a Crown corporation. Are the studies completed and can we expect an early statement?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Postmaster General): The studies are completed, Mr. Speaker, and the government has to make a decision on that matter.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have just about reached the end of the question period but perhaps the hon. member for Hamilton West might be allowed to ask a question.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**GOVERNMENT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE JOBS—EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT TARGETS FOR BALANCE OF 1971 AND 1972**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. Since we now have the \$1 billion employment support program and since he must approach the provinces soon with respect to targets regarding employment, can the Prime Minister now give some indication as to the projections or targets he has as a result of this program recently brought to light?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Is there time?

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could repeat the question directed to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Trudeau: Is there time, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Alexander: In view of the fact that the government has recently brought down its \$1 billion employment support program and in view of the fact that the Prime Minister will be meeting with the provinces soon to discuss this matter, and as it is necessary to have some projections or targets regarding employment and unemployment for the balance of the year and for 1972, could the Prime Minister now indicate whether he has any projections in mind in this regard?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I might say that it is a little late to ask me questions if the hon. member wants a very elaborate answer. I think the answer has been given by the Minister of Finance who, in answers to questions, has

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

said that we want to have the lowest possible unemployment.

Mr. Baldwin: Does the Prime Minister still believe the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour has stated that, at best, governments have averaged about a 4.8 per cent level of unemployment. Are the government's policies now aimed at achieving at least that lower level of unemployment and, if so, is the government aiming for this target in 1972?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I really cannot give a figure. I have heard a member of the NDP in this House mention a figure of 4.5 per cent and I have heard some Conservatives mention that figure too. We are aiming for a really low figure.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, I must say that is different.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have gone beyond the end of the question period. I note there are some hon. members who did not have an opportunity to ask their questions. I feel particularly guilty about the hon. member for Kootenay West who was anxious to ask a supplementary. Perhaps he will be given priority tomorrow to pursue the matter which he initiated today. Orders of the day.

• (3:00 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**INCOME TAX ACT**

The House resumed, from Tuesday, October 19, consideration in committee of Bill C-259, to amend the Income Tax Act and to make certain provisions and alterations in the statute law related to or consequential upon the amendments to that act—Mr. Benson—Mr. Laniel in the chair.

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Mazankowski: Prior to the adjournment hour last night, I was making reference to the impact which the measures outlined in Bill C-259 will have on the agricultural community and the benefits for the associated business community directly related to the industry of agriculture. I was referring specifically to the effect of the capital gains tax, the elimination of the straight line depreciation on farm machinery and the corresponding impact that it will have on the future sale of farm implements, which will, directly and indirectly, affect the rural business community. There are other individuals who feel likewise.

I wish to quote from a letter I received from a tax consultant in the town of Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. He acts as an income tax consultant and accountant for over 800 taxpayers, mainly farmers, small incorporated businesses and small corporations. I quote from the letter dated June 28, 1971:

While it is early to assess the many, many ramifications etc., of the tax changes it does seem to us that another blow has been struck at agriculture and small business.