

*Oral Questions***MANPOWER****MEASURES TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES—CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Given the fact that the Statistics Canada report on unemployment today indicates that the five eastern provinces of this country, while representing only 37 per cent of the work force, have more than 48 per cent of the total unemployment—for example, 13.5 per cent in the Atlantic provinces and 11.4 per cent in Quebec; given the fact that the Economic Council of Canada in its report indicated that job creation incentives of the minister are not enough and that new initiatives are needed; and given the crisis situation we are facing in the Atlantic provinces and the province of Quebec, my question to the minister is: what response can the unemployed of those provinces expect from him as the Minister of Employment and Immigration?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, from time to time we have the doom and gloom emphasis of the hon. member; but in so far as his particular province is concerned—

An hon. Member: When you lose your home, it is pretty sad.

Mr. Cullen: Do you want to hear some figures? I have listened to the shouting. Perhaps we should hear some facts. Institutional and industrial trade for 1977-1978 for the province of Newfoundland alone will be \$13.3 million; 8,000 jobs on Canada Works Phase II; 3,200 jobs on Canada Works Phase I; and Canada Works, 3,000 jobs.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cullen: These were initiatives taken by the government recognizing the situation and not waiting for reports from OECD, from any other agency or newspaper headlines.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I wish the minister would tell that to the 100,000 people in the Atlantic provinces who are unemployed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1432)

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what the minister has said, 40 per cent of those looking for work have been unemployed for three months or more; their unemployment insurance benefits have thereby expired. Given the tragedy behind all these statistics, I ask the minister sincerely what he intends to present to the employment ministers of the four Atlantic provinces with whom he will meet on November 15. Is he prepared to broaden that meeting to include the manpower minister from the province of Quebec, and is he prepared to tell the House that indeed new initiatives are neces-

[Mr. Hnatyshyn.]

sary in order to prevent what everybody but the minister recognizes will be a crisis this winter?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, there was quite a bit in that speech. I think I should respond first by saying that I have pointed out to the unemployed people in the Atlantic provinces that these initiatives are being taken and that there is some hope. The gloom and doom approach of the opposition is not very helpful.

In so far as the meeting with the Atlantic ministers is concerned, that meeting is their initiative, and I have agreed to meet with them. They are meeting with me here in Ottawa, and I am prepared to meet with the minister from Quebec if that should be that minister's wish. However, they are the people setting the terms and conditions, and they are the people bringing other representations to me. In the interim we are looking at things like the spruce budworm situation in Nova Scotia to see what can be done. We are looking at the Gull Island project to see if something can be done there by way of an emergency response by the Canada Works program. There is a myriad of things. We recognize that we have a problem, particularly at this time. There has always been seasonal unemployment in that area, but we do not give up hope like the hon. member does.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, this gloom and doom does not come from me; it comes from Statistics Canada. Given the fact that there has been an increase of only 6,000 jobs in the labour force of the Atlantic provinces so far but that there has been a net increase in the number of people coming on to the labour force of 20,000, a lag of 14,000 in this region alone, is the minister prepared to recognize that job creation programs, commendable and necessary as they are, by and of themselves are not enough? We need more right now.

An hon. Member: We always need more.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, let us consider that thanks to the representations made by hon. members from Newfoundland—primarily on this side of the House—Newfoundland stands fourth in the gross amount of money made available under Canada Works and Young Canada Works. No one is suggesting that the government alone can meet this particular problem. It is not something which can be solved by one department alone. That is why I hope the initiatives taken by the Minister of Finance will receive speedy passage. They were introduced yesterday or the day before, and I say let us get on with those initiatives and create some jobs.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**PLANS TO MODERNIZE SYDNEY STEEL MILL—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In light of the latest tragic unemployment figures