

ments to the Unemployment Insurance Act will be introduced during this session as part of an ongoing, comprehensive inquiry based on our experience in the past few years. It is not an inquiry in one sense, but rather a deep analysis; an evaluation of a very significant program and it is under way at the present time.

Mr. Ellis: I gather from what the minister says that he does not intend to hold a public inquiry. I want to bring one point to his attention—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member should ask a question.

Mr. Ellis: Would the minister not agree that the cost of administration alone would justify an inquiry?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would not think it is in order to ask a question in those terms; it is in the nature of an argument.

* * *

● (1440)

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

INQUIRY WHETHER DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT REACHED WITH QUEBEC

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

Can he tell the House whether or not consultations with the Quebec government with regard to a new regional development program have lead to an agreement? If so, would he soon advise the House of its nature?

[English]

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Yes, Mr. Speaker, negotiations with the government of Quebec have been virtually completed. I have indicated that I am prepared to proceed at any time now with the signing of the general development agreement and it is now a matter for the province of Quebec to indicate a particular date on which it wished to do that.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

POSSIBILITY OF ACT BEING DISINCENTIVE TO WORK— SAVING TO TAXPAYERS UNDER LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to a question asked by my colleague, the hon. member for Hastings. As a result of the comprehensive review related to the Unemployment Insurance Commission, can the minister advise whether there have been any specific studies in relation to this review to determine the relationship between high unemployment, high UIC benefits and the high job vacancy rate? In other words, has the minister been able to

Oral Questions

determine whether in fact the act as presently constituted is a disincentive to work and, if so, what is the answer?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I can quite categorically say that if this is an attempt to focus entirely upon unemployment insurance as the only potential factor in respect of work-ethic erosion, I think it is most unfair and too narrow. One surely would have to examine a great many other factors such as job barriers, employers' attitudes, changing attitudes toward work, education, wages and working conditions and a whole series of other things and recognize that this problem is not peculiar to Canada but exists in nearly all countries of the western world.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind hon. members that we will be running short of time soon and perhaps we should limit the number of supplementaries at this stage. The hon. member will be recognized for a last supplementary question.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, the minister does not have to adopt an argumentative attitude. I asked a simple question and I have not received an answer yet. I should like to ask him a supplementary question. When he brought in Bill C-125 last session he indicated it would save the Canadian taxpayers \$100 million. I am sure he must have some figures in respect of the pending legislation. I should now like to ask if he can advise the House how much the Canadian taxpayers will be saved if and when this bill is introduced as contemplated in the throne speech? Has he any figure in that regard?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, when the bill is introduced in the House I will try to make available all possible information to hon. members.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

DISPOSITION OF GEORGE DERBY HOSPITAL LANDS BURNABY—NEGOTIATIONS WITH MUNICIPALITY

Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of the fact the province of British Columbia has given permission to the municipality of Burnaby to negotiate a deal for the George Derby lands in Burnaby, will the minister advise whether he will negotiate with the municipality and turn this land over at a price comparable with what the federal government paid for it?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, negotiations are presently going on between our department and the province of British Columbia in respect of a possible transfer. I do not have the authority to transfer the George Derby lands to the municipality. However, I am meeting with Burnaby officials tomorrow and I am prepared to discuss the matter.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the right hon. Prime Minister. Does he think a deal could be made in respect of the George Derby lands