

confidence is based that, despite the increase in the personal income tax which will take place on January 1 next, the level of consumer demand will be sufficient to support an expansion of the economy and therefore fight unemployment in the manner to which the minister has dedicated himself.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): It was my judgment that consumer demand as represented by the expansion of the economy would be sufficient and that the temporary reduction authorized by parliament should be allowed to expire. That was fully disclosed to the press at a national press conference when they put those options to me.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

REQUEST FOR INTERIM REPORT ON CERTAIN GRANTS

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, and I have given him notice of my intention to ask him a question on this matter. In view of the revelations in the Standing Committee on Regional Development concerning some millions of dollars in offers of grants by his department that had not been reported to parliament as required by law, would the minister undertake to submit an interim report to parliament at the beginning of next week providing the information that is available now? I ask this question because the deputy minister indicated that it would take several weeks to provide a complete report.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows that, as reported yesterday to the Standing Committee on Regional Development, I have instructed my department to produce a supplementary report on cases involving revised incentive offers as soon as possible. Assurances to this effect were given to the standing committee yesterday both by myself and my deputy minister. Those assurances will be kept.

Mr. Burton: In view of the admission that about 90 grants to corporations were revised after the original offer, could the minister inform the House why it should take several weeks to provide a report to parliament on this matter?

Mr. Speaker: I doubt that the supplementary question is in order.

Mr. Burton: May I ask the minister whether he could not undertake to speed up the completion of this report and to provide an interim report, as I asked in my original question, which would provide information that is available now and allow time for checking out all the departmental records? Furthermore, could the minister also assure the House that this information will be made public before the next federal election?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I do not know when the next election will be held, Mr. Speaker.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): The minister said, perhaps properly, that it would take considerable time to go through the 1,400 cases which have already been given grants, but could he not early next week at least present us with a list of the 90 corporations, which, as he has already said in the committee, have had their grants revised?

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to draft an interim report as I would like to make sure that the figures quoted are correct. Otherwise, the committee members would be justified in charging us with giving false information. All records will have to be checked and a report could be brought in within reasonable time, I think.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

LAY-OFFS IN NORTHWESTERN QUEBEC—REFUSAL TO PAY BENEFITS—REVIEW OF REGULATION RESPECTING SEVERANCE PAY

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

In view of the fact that following the closing of Que-
mont and Noranda mines and of the CIP mill in the town
of Témiscaming, these companies have to give severance
pay to laid off employees, and in view of the fact that the
Unemployment Insurance Commission refuses to pay
benefits to these newly unemployed people on the ground
that they would have to exhaust this money before bene-
fits can be paid to them, is the minister in a position to
indicate whether his department is reviewing this situa-
tion which I think is utterly illogical so that these unpaid
unemployed people can get fair treatment?

[English]

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Manpower and Immi-
gration):** Mr. Speaker, the whole area of what constitutes
income is being reviewed at the present moment in light
of the regulations, and that includes severance pay and
vacation pay. As a general rule severance pay is spread
over a period of not more than 33 weeks to make certain
that people with labour attachment of 52 weeks still quali-
fy for major benefits.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: I would like to ask a supplementary ques-
tion, Mr. Speaker.

I could see the smile on the face of the Minister of
Regional Economic Expansion when I spoke of the
unpaid unemployed.

However, I would ask the minister to tell us if the local
unions have made representations or filed briefs with the
department so that these people will be treated fairly.
Because, even though they are receiving severance pay
they are still unemployed.