

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I refer the hon. member to the statement I made in the House on January 28 last. The information is that at the moment there will be no additional amendments to that act.

Mr. Nesbitt: A further supplementary. In view of the changed employment situation and also because of the many complaints registered by members in all parts of this House regarding Unemployment Insurance Commission practices, will the government House Leader reconsider the possibility of introducing appropriate amendments to the Act as soon as possible?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I will reconsider the matter in conjunction with the legislative program generally.

[Translation]

QUEBEC—SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS TO
ALLEVIATE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Could he indicate clearly to the House whether the 6.7 per cent unemployment level really worries the government, since this situation is particularly hard on Quebec? Are short-term projects being prepared in order to put an end to this calamity which has hit the province of Quebec?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, conditions would be better in Quebec if the rate of private investment were not the second lowest of all the Canadian provinces.

Of course, if private investors decide to invest elsewhere, it is not the federal government's fault but that of the present government of the province of Quebec.

Mr. Valade: I would like to ask a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

In my opinion, the Prime Minister did not answer my question. Therefore, I ask him what short-term programs the government has prepared in order to check unemployment in Quebec?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will recognize with regard to his supplementary question or to the second part of his first question that he is asking the Prime Minister or a minister to make a statement on general policy. I think such statements should be made on motions.

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

[English]

ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN
COMBATING INFLATION—U.S. POLICY

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): My question is supplementary to that of the Leader of the Opposition. Is the Prime Minister prepared to make a statement on motions indicating the level of unemployment that will be tolerated across the nation in various regions? I ask this in view of the fact that the national statistic of 6.7 per cent misrepresents the statistics for the regions where unemployment is as high as 15.3 per cent. While the Prime Minister is responding, perhaps he might want to react to my question of privilege yesterday which I raised when the Prime Minister referred to the seasonally adjusted statistics of March compared with November, which are non-comparable. Perhaps he could indicate whether the basis of his answer was because of a lack of knowledge or if there was an obvious intention to mislead the House?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will recognize that when he asks a question in these terms it cannot be accepted by the Chair. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question is out of order. If the hon. member will ask a question in accordance with the normal practice, I will recognize him and allow him to ask the question. Perhaps he may want to rephrase it.

Mr. Lundrigan: I will rephrase my question. Perhaps the Prime Minister can indicate whether he will make such a statement. Will he also indicate whether the government is planning to follow the lead of the United States authorities who are very aggressive in this field and who are at present relaxing their anti-inflationary policies, at least on a regional basis, in order to stimulate employment in areas which are drastically affected? Is the government planning to follow that lead at least on a regional basis?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not particularly intend taking my lead from the United States in this or in other matters if I can avoid it. I want to remind the House it takes no courage for a government to spend more money in all parts of the country. I repeat that we can very easily boost our spending in all parts of the