

Oral Questions

participation rate across the country. Then there was a flat 3 per cent of the number of unemployed deducted. This has the effect of tilting it toward the high and chronic unemployment areas. As to the details of the \$53 million in the Province of Quebec or, for that matter, any other province, I would refer hon. members to the information which will be forthcoming today and tomorrow and to the particular departments which will be administering the projects, of which there are 15.

● (1422)

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, could the minister assure the House that these projects which will be implemented in the province of Quebec have been previously discussed with certain ministers of the government of Quebec? Could he also give us the assurance that these projects comply with priorities already established by the province of Quebec?

[English]

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, this is a federal initiative. The direct hiring will be under federal authority and the dispensation of wages will be made from federal funds although there will be the usual exchange of information with the provinces.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, since the minister has scheduled a press conference to that effect, would he not consider that it would be useful and fair to us in the opposition if he were to make a statement at three o'clock this afternoon so that we could ask him relevant questions? We are quite pleased with these investments but still we would like to ask a few questions and I think it would be fair also to all members of the House.

[English]

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I weighed that consideration but I felt that this program having been announced on October 20, as the hon. member preceding the hon. member who has just spoken took great pains to establish, this is not the first announcement of it. Because of the questions I have been asked and the obvious interest shown, I have responded to questions here but some of the details are available and they will be in hon. members offices today. I have answered fully the questions asked here today, and I shall be pleased to answer further questions during the question period. There is no intention to withhold information. We want all interested members to know about the projects and, indeed, to advise us with regard to the projects in their areas when they are made known.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS**INCREASE IN BASIC DISABILITY PENSION—SUGGESTED RESUBMISSION TO CABINET**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. It relates to the deep concern of veterans and veterans organi-

[Mr. Andras.]

zations, as well as a great many Canadians, over the announcement the minister made some weeks ago to the effect that the basic rate of the war disability pension would not now be restored to the composite rate standard which was set in 1973. My question to the minister is this: has he at any time since he made that announcement taken this matter again before cabinet? If he has, what was the result? If not, will he make such a submission at an early date?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): At the time I made the announcement I did say that I knew the veterans and the veterans organizations would be disappointed. But I also said, and I repeat it now, that the government will be again considering this matter when fiscal restraints can be eased.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I hope that the lack of restraint we see in so many quarters will encourage the minister to feel that the time has come to take this issue back to cabinet. When he does, may I ask him if he will also point out to cabinet the small amount of money which would be needed to pay prisoner-of-war compensation to the fewer than 200 World War I veterans who were prisoners of war and who are still with us? Will he also keep alive the question of amending the rules respecting widows' pensions so that those whose husbands were receiving pensions of below 48 per cent will get a pension as of right?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, the items enumerated by the hon. member are always under study in my department and could be moved forward at any time.

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FINANCE**DATE OF INTRODUCTION OF EMPLOYMENT CREDITS MEASURE—NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED**

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. As he will recall, in his statement of October 20 he said:

I am announcing tonight employment credits for job creation.

Yesterday, in answer to a question put by the leader of my party, the minister stated "We are busy drafting it"—meaning the employment credit bill. Would the minister tell us what progress he has made in drafting the bill and whether we may receive it today?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the bill is not ready. As I indicated before, I was stuck in the House for almost six weeks on Bill C-11.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chrétien: I am working on the bill and I hope everything will be ready very soon. I hope it will be in place in the early months of next year.