

term competitive position on world markets as well as defending our markets at home.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the third quarter was as flat as this government's program during the election campaign. Since the Minister of Finance has said he is not satisfied with the effects of his budget on unemployment, may I ask him why he did not respond to the persistently high rate of unemployment during the year by increasing the expansionary effect of the economy and utilizing the obviously improved budgetary position, which for the first nine months is running at a rate of \$600 million over the previous year? If the minister was not satisfied with the effects of his budget on unemployment, has he any explanation of why he did not act when it became clear that it was unsatisfactory?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister will be allowed to reply to the question, but I will then go to other questions for a few minutes and return to supplementaries. The hon. member for Drummond wishes to ask a question and the hon. member for Selkirk had a supplementary to his question that he did not get a chance to ask. Therefore, when the minister has replied to the question from the Leader of the Opposition we will go to another subject for a few moments and I will return to this very important matter later.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I dealt with this point thoroughly—

Mr. Stanfield: No, you did not.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): —in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. The hon. gentleman was present so I will not repeat what I said. It is a debating point and we can take it up again during the budget debate. However, I will again draw to the attention of the House that when the hon. gentleman tries to isolate the budgetary position of the government from the non-budgetary he is giving a misleading impression to the House.

* * *

[Translation]

MANPOWER

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OF PROJECTS

Mr. Jean-Marie Boisvert (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Can he tell us if the department he manages considers as the most important factor, with regard to the approval of a local initiatives project, the level of unemployment registered in the area where the project originates.

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as I have already indicated, we take this into consideration as a major factor.

Oral Questions

• (1440)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REDISTRIBUTION OF RIDINGS—CONSIDERATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO INCREASE NUMBER OF SEATS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister let the House and the country know what progress, if any, has been made in connection with the matter of redistribution by way of an alternative to the present system and with particular reference to the number of members in the House? On January 11 this matter was brought to his attention and he indicated consideration was being given as to what might be done and later he repeated that. I know that members in all parts of the House are naturally interested in this matter as time is of the essence, having regard to the fact that committees in various provinces are already providing maps or getting ready to provide them on the basis of the present representation in the House.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer the question addressed by the right hon. gentleman. I believe the last time the question was raised the Prime Minister suggested that I might meet with the other House leaders and consider the matter with the objective that if it was possible to reach some consensus we might move on this matter. I have had a meeting today with my opposite numbers and we had a general discussion, with some explicit proposals that I expect will now be discussed among all parties to see whether some conclusion can be reached. I believe we all felt that at this stage this might be the most effective procedure to follow.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether consideration has been given by him, as he has a general responsibility in this regard, or the cabinet to a constitutional amendment to bring about an increase in the number of seats in the House and also to provide a floor for some of the provinces where the population is decreasing very rapidly?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the right hon. member will refer to my previous answer he will see that a variety of ways have been considered by myself, and we have decided to proceed with this matter in the way just mentioned by the House leader.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Prime Minister whether the government is giving consideration to a constitutional amendment. That was my question and he cannot pass it off to one of the junior ministers.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Poor old Allan.

An hon. Member: Hi there, junior.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I asked the Prime Minister a question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!