

consulted the provinces when we know that virtually every province has experienced continual increases in unemployment and would like to coordinate their views with those of the government?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. leader of the NDP has not indicated the date of the letter.

Mr. Broadbent: June 22.

Mr. Trudeau: In that case I was taking Premier Schreyer into my confidence and I am surprised that he has taken the hon. member into his confidence.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You cannot trust those socialists.

Mr. Paproski: And you wanted him in your Cabinet. Shame!

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[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS

REQUEST GOVERNMENT FAVOUR SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of State responsible for small businesses.

Could the minister tell the House whether his department has defined or will define what small and medium size businesses are? Could he also tell whether the government will introduce legislation to help truly small businesses in Canada, thereby ensuring the conservation of current jobs and the creation of new ones, as well as the recovery of the economy in all regions of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Small Business)): Mr. Speaker, we will be defining what will be termed a small business. We are dealing with the question of a definition at this time but I have no plans for legislation.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

I should like to ask the minister whether he has read the program which was presented on May 26 last to a Senate committee by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businessmen. If so, could he tell the House whether he or the government finds this program interesting and whether it will be used to draft a policy for small and medium size businesses?

[English]

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, we have worked very closely with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and a number of things they have suggested will perhaps be incorporated in some of the things we are doing.

Oral Questions

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT IN ATLANTIC REGION—ALLEGATION DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS AGGRAVATE PROBLEM

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In answer to the first question today he referred to the difficulty in making a month by month comparison with respect to the unemployment situation. I should like to direct his attention to the situation in Atlantic Canada. I am sure he is well aware of the serious trend of increasing unemployment there since 1969. It is now an average of 50 per cent higher in the four provinces than in the rest of Canada. Even with the programs of the Department of Manpower, no serious turnaround of the present unemployment crisis has been achieved in Atlantic Canada. Can the Prime Minister indicate whether he has consulted with some of his key ministers with respect to the impact of their programs? I am thinking of the Department of Transport and the Department of Supply and Services which have been criticized recently for in effect adding to and continuing the problem of chronic high unemployment in the Atlantic provinces?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The hon. member will recall that the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion did bring in very substantial concessions for those industries which would settle in areas of high unemployment, particularly the maritimes and eastern Quebec. Naturally these will take a little bit of time to take effect, but it is an indication of the government's real concern about high unemployment in those areas. Of course, the direct work programs are also geared to areas of high unemployment and proportionately much more per capita is being spent in the hon. member's area than in other areas of Canada where unemployment is lower. As I indicated in confidence to Premier Schreyer, other programs are in preparation, but I think that is the last time I take him into my confidence.

● (1430)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): The Prime Minister may know that repeatedly in questions in the House, both to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, it has been difficult, in fact impossible, to determine the impact of that recent financial initiative. I do not believe there has been any consultation with the premiers as to their appreciation of its importance in their situation. I should like to ask the Prime Minister, in light of the fact that the Department of Supply and Services over the past year has substantially reduced on a proportionate basis its spending in Atlantic Canada, and with a view to the breakdown in recent talks between the Minister of Transport and his provincial counterparts, whether or not the Prime Minister will give new instructions to key ministries which have a definite economic impact in the Atlantic regions in order that not just in the job creation area under Manpower but in large sectors of the economy influenced by these key departments there can be a significant turnaround.