

prepared to lend their time and to listen, and the flying squads as well.

I had the honour of serving as a volunteer with the Crisis Centre. This week is Crisis Centre Week, from June 4 to June 10, as proclaimed in Vancouver. I am sure I speak on behalf of all Members of Parliament when I congratulate the Crisis Centre on its fifteenth birthday. I wish the Centre many more successful years, and I urge the federal Government to provide badly needed federal funding for crisis centres across the country.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

MAY UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES—COMPARISON WITH UNITED STATES

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, who is away on public business, in the absence of the Deputy Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister of Finance—

Mr. Pinard: Where is Brian?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: He is in your riding.

Mr. McGrath:—in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, in the absence of the Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development, in the absence of the Minister of State for Youth, I direct my question to the Marie Antoinette of the Cabinet, the Minister of State for Finance.

Today, on schedule, unemployment figures were released showing that once again our unemployment rate has increased from 11.4 per cent to 11.7 per cent. Yet in the United States, for the same month, its unemployment rate went down from 7.8 per cent to 7.5 per cent. Indeed, its unemployment rate has gone down from 8.4 per cent in November to 7.5 per cent, whereas during the same period of time ours has risen from 11.1 per cent to 11.7 per cent.

There is no growth in employment in western Canada. There is no growth in employment in the Atlantic Provinces.

Yesterday the Minister said that on interest rates we were tracked with the U.S., that we had to follow U.S. interest rates. Why does he not explain to us why we are not tracked with U.S. unemployment rates? Why is it that its unemployment continues to go down and ours continues to go up?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I was so bemused by the idea of being Marie Antoinette that I was somewhat distracted from the Hon. Member's principal question. The short answer to his question is that the growth in the labour force in Canada has gone forward at a faster rate than in other major industrialized

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countries. Comparison with the United States would suggest that if the growth in the Canadian labour force had been similar to that in the United States there would have been one million fewer people entering the workforce in Canada, and the unemployment rate in Canada today would have been about 4 per cent, instead of the 11 per cent which we are encountering today.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacLaren: What has happened in the past month is that a large number of additional jobs has been created in the Canadian economy. Some 23,000 jobs have been created, additional to those which have been created since the recession, but additional workers have joined the labour force. Some 68,000 new workers have joined the labour force, so that the seasonally adjusted rate has indeed increased by some 45,000.

I am sure all of us on both sides of the House share a concern about that increase. We, for our part, will continue, both through direct government intervention and funding and through indirect support for the private sector, to work toward a decrease or reduction in that level of unemployment.

• (1120)

SIZE OF LABOUR FORCE—COMPARISON WITH UNITED STATES

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister just does not know what he is talking about. He does not seem to care because we are talking about people, people who are not too lazy to work. They want jobs, and this Government cannot provide them with jobs.

Let the Minister explain to us how it is that since November the U.S. labour force has grown at a faster rate than the Canadian labour force. The figures show a 1.6 per cent increase in the U.S. labour force as opposed to a 1.2 per cent increase in the Canadian labour force. Their unemployment rate has continued to decline. Ours continues to increase. Let him explain this, that we are still 122,000 jobs behind since the commencement of the recession in August, 1981, whereas the United States has not only picked up all lost jobs but is four million jobs ahead. How does he explain that?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I have already commented on the Member's point with regard to the United States. He and I know that since the recession began in November, 1982, we have been creating jobs at a faster rate in Canada than in most other industrialized countries. We have equally seen a substantially greater increase in the Canadian labour force than has occurred in the United States or in other OECD countries.

Let me cite for the Member, who should know, that there are now 40 per cent more Canadians working today than in 1968, compared with the other six summit countries where there has only been a 13 per cent increase in the labour force. In Canada we have experienced a substantially higher increase in new workers joining our labour force than any other industrialized country.