

supported the fight against inflation the sooner the danger of unemployment would recede.

An hon. Member: That is a new theory.

Mr. Orlikow: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since unemployment is rising and inflation is continuing to increase, can the House take it that the Prime Minister has no intention of relaxing the program of restraint regardless of whether unemployment continues to rise at an increasing rate?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I realize that the opposition has some difficulty in making choices, but the government is faced with the choice of either giving up the fight against inflation or continuing it. I want to reassure the House and country that it would be no problem at all for the government to spend many, many more millions of dollars in all parts of the country if it lacked the courage to continue the fight against inflation, as apparently seems to be the case with the opposition.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question for the Prime Minister who has referred to the difficulties of the opposition. Is he not aware that the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, before the Standing Committee on Regional Development just the other day, had occasion to say that he was not defending the government's policy?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. MacInnis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think any hon. member of the House has reason to raise a question of privilege or point of order when the Prime Minister talks of the difficulty the opposition has in understanding the government's approach to a particular problem when a minister of the government, a minister greatly responsible for this particular matter, has told the committee that he is not defending the government's policy.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East.

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—RATIFICATION OF SPECIAL AREAS PROGRAM AGREEMENTS

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the alarming rate of unem-

Inquiries of the Ministry

ployment in the provinces of Newfoundland and New Brunswick, and in view of both these provinces having ratified the agreements respecting the new special areas program under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, may I ask the President of the Treasury Board why Treasury Board has held up ratification or approval of these two important programs?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, Treasury Board has not held up ratification or approval.

An hon. Member: Get cracking, then.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, before the Regional Development Committee a few days ago, indicated that the programs were currently awaiting the approval of Treasury Board. These programs were supposed to have been in effect by April 1. I again ask the President of the Treasury Board why Treasury Board has not approved these programs?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is repeating the question he asked. An answer was given. Perhaps he may not be satisfied with the answer, but the question has been asked already.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, may I rephrase my question. It is a very important one to these two provinces. May I ask the President of the Treasury Board why Treasury Board has not approved these two programs?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I should like to correct the misapprehension. These two particular programs have been approved by Treasury Board.

Mr. Diefenbaker: When, today?

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—AMENDMENTS TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, which I would have directed to the Minister of Labour had he been here. In his absence I will direct it to the government House Leader. In view of the increasing delays and difficulties in getting unemployment insurance claims, and this is related directly to the increasing unemployment, can the government House Leader inform us if the government is contemplating amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act before this session is completed in June?