

to these 1.5 million people in this country who want to work?

Why can the minister not figure out that his policies are not working? Why can he not commit today to making job creation his first priority and not his last?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is one of our major priorities. The fact that 41,000 more people are working in the manufacturing sector today than there were in the last two months is proof positive that it is working. The fact that there were 31,000 new jobs created in the month of May is proof positive that our policies are working.

The fact that the Minister of Employment and Immigration just announced an additional \$150 million for job training and skills upgrading is again proof positive that this is a priority for us. Why does the hon. member not listen to the answers, rather than reading his rhetoric from questions he prepared in advance.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. He will remember well that back in 1984 when his party took office, it decried the tragic situation in terms of the unacceptably high levels of unemployment, the crisis in unemployment created by the Liberal administration before that was up in the 11 per cent range. Well, we are now back to 1984 levels of unemployment.

May I suggest rather than this exchange which may be seen as some sort of statistical mud wrestling in terms of figures, that we admit there is a crisis facing our country in terms of the high levels of unemployment.

Will the Minister of Finance say he takes this seriously and that he plans to call an economic summit of finance ministers across the country to deal exclusively with finding ways and means of reducing the high levels of unemployment in Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, ministers of finance meet on a regular basis. We have had first ministers' meetings to deal with the economic issues.

Perhaps the most appropriate way to help resolve the problem is for the hon. member to talk to his socialist

friends in the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. They moved in to take up the slack that we provided in terms of reductions both for the corporate and private sector and for individual Canadians. We lowered taxes, we did not raise them.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, back in the 1930s, R.B. Bennett admitted that his Conservative policies of the day were wrong and he changed course half-way through the 1930s. Unfortunately, it was too late.

Before it is too late now in the 1990s, my question for the Minister of Finance is this. He knows that there is a willingness across the country to introduce a municipal infrastructure program that will create thousands and thousands of jobs. That can be done. He has the support of governments across the country.

Will he now invest in the future of those people who are unemployed and give them a chance to work and get them off unemployment insurance and welfare?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I repeat for the hon. member's benefit, we addressed in the budget a specific area that needed to be addressed. That was essentially the manufacturing and processing sector and improving the business climate, the small business climate and adding some stimulus to the economy by bringing down the burden of taxation. These are all positive things.

• (1130)

A positive indicator is clearly the fact that there have been 41,000 new jobs created in the manufacturing sector. There have been 31,000 new jobs created in the month of May. The labour force has grown by 56,000.

The hon. member wants to go on a spending binge. He wants a huge infrastructure program. I know the position of the hon. member's party is that we should print money to do that job. That is not an option as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, R.B. Bennett had the courage to admit his government had made an error in judgment, that it had brought in policies that were not working. Unfortunately, it turned course too late in the day.