

*Oral Questions*

with unemployment, and, more specifically, would the minister ensure that unemployment is put on the agenda for the meeting scheduled for this fall of the finance ministers of the provinces along with the federal Minister of Finance, and at that meeting would the federal government submit a national program dealing with unemployment?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance):** The question was much discussed in the context of the budget and I do not have any further proposals to put before the House at this time. I think it is fair to say that the question was not extensively discussed at the last meeting of finance ministers, and while there is scope for general economic discussion at these meetings, the question was not extensively canvassed. I would be prepared, if provincial ministers wished to discuss it during the course of the meeting.

**Mr. Broadbent:** I am asking the Minister of Finance to make that specific suggestion himself. I would like to ask him a second question. Since there are still more than 700,000 Canadians without jobs, which in percentage terms represents a year over year increase from the same month of last year, would the minister tell us if the federal government now has any specific programs to expand job opportunities in the country, or will we have to rely simply on the program which was announced earlier by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, which will not come into effect until January, 1977?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** As I indicated, I do not propose to announce any further proposal at this time.

**Mr. Broadbent:** I will ask my final question, probably with no better results. Given the fact that in Atlantic Canada, the four provinces considered together, there is an unemployment average running at between 10 per cent at the bottom end to something in excess of 12 per cent at the top, in every case exceeding the national average substantially, could the minister tell us if the government will be presenting to the House any specific proposals to deal with this persistent unemployment in Atlantic Canada?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** I just indicated to the hon. gentleman that I have no proposals I intend to put forward at this time.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HOUSING****SUGGESTED INCREASE IN HOUSING STARTS TO COPE WITH UNEMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

As The Conference Board in Canada has indicated that there will be a marked increase in unemployment in the fall because of lower housing construction in Canada, which is considerably lower in Canada even now, can the minister tell us what he intends to do to stimulate housing or encourage people to become homeowners?

[Mr. Broadbent.]

[English]

**Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted the hon. member asked this question. I think he would be interested in the housing starts for June, which are at the rate of 275,000 per year.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Danson:** That is substantially higher than the rate of 235,000 starts which we targetted, and it is 7,000 more than the rate for May, so we are doing a great deal at the present time. The industry is holding up extremely well. The housing starts are for the right people at the right price, and we expect that this level of activity will continue throughout the year and that employment will be maintained at a very high level.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Translation]

**Mr. Beaudoin:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

The minister seems very optimistic but unfortunately he is unaware of what is going on in the province of Quebec where, according to the information from that province, housing construction is slowing down. I do not know whether the minister goes to Quebec from time to time, or whether he knows what goes on there, but that is the case.

I therefore ask the minister whether he can tell the House what he intends to do to stimulate construction, especially in the poor provinces or those where development is slower. Would he say that, in the next few months, the interest rate can be lowered, or that subsidies can be given new owners with regard to interest rates, to a greater extent that is being done now, and so encourage people to own their own homes?

[English]

**Mr. Danson:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. First of all, with regard to Quebec, the starts for June alone are up to 6,900 compared to 4,000 last year, so there is an increase there. We have programs with regard to interest reduction, grants for moderate priced housing and programs to make it possible for people of moderate incomes to purchase housing which is of good quality. These programs will continue. In addition, we have extensive rehabilitation programs going on in the province of Quebec, including rural areas.

\* \* \*

**THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****MINISTER'S ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF NEW JOBS CREATED—SECTOR OF ECONOMY IN WHICH JOBS CREATED**

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. I note that the principal reason for the improvement of the unemployment rate over the second quarter of the year stems from a decline of the labour force in the past quarter, down some 63,000, rather than an increase in employment, which in turn is down 72,000 in the last quarter. Can the minister indicate when he expects the economy to be producing jobs at a rate which would conform to the prediction that he