

*Oral Questions*

ascertain the accuracy of the allegations in the question. After I do that I would be very happy to respond.

## DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister could explain why, when this information, which is based on statistics from StatsCan, was made available to his Department two weeks ago, his Department did not go immediately to look at this source of revenue which could be helping farmers in western Canada who are suffering today?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat today what I said yesterday. Tax reform is a major objective of this Government. Consultations and work towards that are beginning now and will continue over the next few months. We will take into consideration findings of that sort.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## PENITENTIARIES

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF FIGURES MENTIONED BY  
PRIME MINISTER

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford):** Today, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Prime Minister again to justify the 38 per cent unemployment rate he gave for Port-Cartier. The Prime Minister was probably exaggerating once again and probably included the sick, pensioners and pregnant women as part of the unemployed population. My question to the Prime Minister is as follows: Could—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! I think it is very important to realize that if you have a question, it should be put directly. An argument about statistics is not an appropriate subject for oral Question Period.

**Mr. Lapierre:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but when a sentence starts with the words "*Est-ce—*", that means it is a question. Could the Prime Minister inform the House why he has misled the House and Canadians? May I ask him why he doesn't correct this bad habit of exaggerating?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Shefford wants statistics. He will have them. What the people of Manicouagan have heard today is that 38 per cent of the people of a riding, who in 1984 received part of their income from unemployment insurance are not people—

**Mr. Lapierre:** Answer the question!

**Mr. Bouchard:** I let you ask your question—let me answer it. I am trying to understand the Hon. Member's logic. Thirty-eight per cent of the population of a riding, plus people on welfare, or the labour force, if you prefer, plus people receiving

welfare, plus people who are no longer seeking employment, isn't that enough to want to take care of what your hon. colleague called regional disparity? Even in the riding of the Prime Minister of Canada, we have to take care of—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Hon. Member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre).

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF WORKS UNDERTAKEN IN PORT-  
CARTIER

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Immigration doesn't know what he is talking about, because the statistics the Prime Minister used were not the unemployment statistics. However, Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Solicitor General. I would like to ask him why and at what cost the work at Port-Cartier has been speeded up so that it will be completed by September 1988.

● (1430)

[English]

**Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I have said on many occasions.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Quit stonewalling.

**Mr. Kelleher:** The decision to move to Port-Cartier was a government decision. It was made to alleviate the economic disparity which persisted in that area. I am quite sure that the Hon. Member would have no objections to such a laudable objective of the Government.

## CONSTRUCTION OF PRISON IN PORT-CARTIER

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, my question, too, is on the location of the Port-Cartier prison in the Prime Minister's riding. If in fact the rationale for the location of this prison was the high rate of unemployment in that particular constituency, can the Solicitor General explain why the prison was not located in Rimouski which had a higher rate of unemployment, in Chicoutimi which had a higher rate of unemployment, or in Gaspé which had a higher rate of unemployment? Why this particular goody to the Prime Minister's constituency when other ridings in Quebec had much higher levels of unemployment?

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

[Translation]

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Of course, Mr. Speaker, when the Government... I am trying to see the logic of the New Democratic Party. You want us to help regions that need help. In the riding of Manicouagan, we are dealing with an employment situation known to everybody in Quebec. Everybody knows the North Shore is one of the worst off areas in terms of jobs. And Members opposite are to blame. So what else can we