

of that Government to direct investment at all so as to make sure Canada does survive the transition.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is exaggerating the situation. He says the Government has no policies whatever. I have in my hand a document which is available to him as well as to myself, put out by the Department of Employment and Immigration, entitled: "An Inventory of Federal Employment and Manpower Measures". Among those measures—if I were to read them it would take another 10 minutes—are many direct job-creation programs in that Department, many programs to assist employment. There are other Departments, such as DRIE, Agriculture and Fisheries, which also have policies to create employment.

That having been said, one of the difficulties in this country, and I suppose a benefit as well, is that we are a federal state. I see situations from time to time where we have governments at one level wanting to go in this direction and governments at another level going in another direction. Britain and France are unitary states. The United States is a federal state but most of the economic power is in the hands of the federal Government, the central Government.

I am not saying that things are perfect here, I admit that. I would like to see us go much further in co-ordinating this employment policy about which I have been speaking. But to say that nothing is being done is not fair, nor is it correct. I know, because I am a member of this caucus, that the highest priority of members of this caucus is the easing of unemployment. We have done quite a bit. We have created a lot of jobs. But for the long term, I am suggesting some measures that could still be taken that would improve the situation.

Mr. St. Germain: Mr. Speaker, I have one question for the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East (Mr. Allmand). I do not doubt the honest intent of the Hon. Member having worked and served with him on standing committees. However, on the question of shortening the work week, I think the Hon. Member will agree that shortening the work week is a very controversial issue in economies in the western world today. The Hon. Member cites extra jobs and improved productivity as part of the shorter work week. First, given any information that has been received, this is one side of the coin, not necessarily the picture from the actual job creators, and on that I think the Hon. Member will agree. Given the state of the economy in Canada and the plight of small business—I am not saying big business that has been propped up by government—in this time of recession and low profits how can he possibly suggest that we go to the small-businessman and ask him how he can shorten the work week and maintain the status quo on wages?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I admit the proposals for a shorter work week are controversial. In West Germany I believe it is the steel workers who have now put on the table their demands for a 35-hour work week. That proposal is being very strongly opposed by the employers and the German government. However, I attended a conference last year at which Swedish representatives from all sectors were present.

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They made a point that this is essential but it can only be moved forward in an expanding or a recovering economy. I would suggest that we are in a recovering economy, an expanding economy. If you do move to the shorter work week, of course, it has to be done as a trade-off for other benefits. Obviously, if you want higher wages you cannot have—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but he can only continue at this time if there is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Allmand: If you are going to have the shorter work week, no union will accept a cutback in wages; but some, as in West Germany, are willing to accept a curtailment in the increase of their wages in exchange for the 35-hour week. That can be done by increasing employment in a recovering and expanding economy.

● (1700)

With respect to the Hon. Member's question about the small business sector, I am not suggesting that the shorter work week be imposed. Principally that has to be achieved through collective bargaining. I am trying to put the argument before the House that it has benefits not only in terms of lifestyle but in terms of employment. I recommend strongly to unions, governments and managers that where it is a subject of collective bargaining, they look at it seriously.

In terms of the small-business sector, in many cases they are not unionized. When one has only three, four or ten employees, it is very difficult. Very often those employees work much longer hours; they do not work labour standards hours. I am suggesting that we can achieve it in two ways—principally by collective bargaining, which would not apply in many respects to the small business sector; and, second, through labour standards.

We have a Labour Standards Code in the country. By the way, labour standards have been improved by legislation at the federal level. Whether it is the minimum wage, fair employment practices or whatever, something could be done in terms of amending the labour law to provide labour standards to bring about a shorter work week in our transportation and communication industries, which are large industries.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the Budget we are debating has been described by at least two columnists who write regularly about economic matters as having been produced by the use of smoke and mirrors. We have been told by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) and by other speakers on behalf of the Government that the recession is over; or, if it is not quite over, we are moving away from it. This is despite the fact that there are 1.5 million unemployed people at the present time.

Also we were told that the Budget was designed to help people who needed it most. However, when we analyse the details, we see that 80 per cent of the benefits which will flow from it will go to those in the middle and upper-income