

now? Will he announce the date of a new budget which will be brought down before the summer recess?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I would like to co-operate as much as possible with the hon. member, but it is not possible to announce a new budget date today.

#### REDUCTION IN ENERGY TAX REVENUE

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Madam Speaker, I should like to put a different version of the same question to the minister. I point out in the same context that last fall's budget assumed that the federal government would have some \$61 billion in revenue coming in over the next five years from its National Energy Program. As a result of the announcements made two days ago, that amount has dropped a full \$25 billion. In that context, and given the immense negative implications for the people of Canada in terms of the economic impact of that data, will the minister at least assure us today that he will announce, within 24 hours, the date of a budget which will be brought down before we recess?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** No, Madam Speaker, I cannot give that assurance.

#### INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the minister once again, considering that since the budget came down in November, 58,000 men and women have been laid off in the province of British Columbia, unemployment in the province of Ontario in the first quarter has increased 111 per cent, and in the province of Quebec 75,000 men and women have been laid off in the manufacturing sector alone, will he acknowledge that he has some serious obligations to the people of the country and tell them, especially the unemployed, that they will have some prospect for jobs this summer because he will bring in a budget within the next month?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member has correctly identified unemployment as a very serious problem in the economy. He knows that we are now in the midst of a world-wide recession and that unemployment levels are rising in every country of the world, or most countries in the industrialized world. In the next breath the hon. member goes on to suggest that there is some easy way out of this difficulty—

**Mr. Broadbent:** No, no.

**Mr. MacEachen:** —and that the magical wand is the presentation of a budget. The hon. member never tells us what policies he would recommend except policies which, if the Minister of Finance were unwise enough to accept them, would make the situation worse, would cause more inflation and more unemployment. That is the policy of the New Democratic Party which has been restated time and time

#### Oral Questions

again. It is not a policy which is followed by any government that I know in the industrialized world, including his socialist friends in Europe.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS

##### PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF POPULAR REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

**Madam Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of the House to the distinguished presence in our gallery of His Excellency Mr. Frigyes Puja, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Hungary.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

#### FISHERIES

##### GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION OF PROCESSING PLANT AT ST. ANTHONY, Nfld.

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I should like to ask the minister why the Government of Canada, in taking over the fish processing plant in St. Anthony, Newfoundland, is moving by way of the fisheries Prices Support Board. Why is it directly taking over the plant through the aegis of a Crown corporation, instead of providing the necessary assistance in concert with the Government of Newfoundland to the operator of the fisheries products plant, which is a much more sensible arrangement? Why is the government proceeding this way?

● (1430)

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Madam Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of National Revenue and I went quite some distance in our efforts to try to find a solution. I met with the company in question. We had very lengthy discussions. There were negotiations between representatives of my department and the company. In the end it was agreed that this was the only approach which would work. I recognize that it is not a perfect approach but I had to try to find a solution so that the fishermen, whose season was about to start, would have a counter at which to sell their fish. I made it clear that it is a one-year agreement or understanding until we can come up with some longer-term solution.

**Mr. McGrath:** The minister did not address the crucial question of why he did not provide assistance to the operator in co-operation with the Newfoundland government, and why the Kirby task force was diverted from its principle function to put this deal together.