

let the government go to work, but he refuses to allow the Parliament of Canada a mandate so that it can go to work on behalf of the unemployed in this country. That is shameful behaviour by this minister.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Clark: The minister is playing cute games with regard to a budget, but will he give us an absolute assurance that he will bring in a budget before the dissolution of this parliament?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, last Friday I told a committee of this House that I felt it was important to wait until the government incentive measures, in force since January 1, had been applied in every sector of the Canadian economy before bringing in a new budget. I also stated that I was hoping to bring in a budget either in late April or early May. As for the dissolution of parliament, this is not a matter within my jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, what concerns us is that we believe the question of whether there will be a budget does not come under the control of the Minister of Finance and that the Prime Minister has said there will not be a budget, because he does not want the economy discussed in the House of Commons before there is an election.

● (1417)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

EFFECTIVE DATE OF EMPLOYMENT TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): This minister holds the double distinction of being the first minister whose policies have put one million Canadians out of work and the first minister in 15 years who has refused to bring in a budget.

I want to ask him about one of the measures the government has brought in, the employment tax credit. My office telephoned Manpower offices in Windsor, St. Catharines and Sudbury—three Ontario centres where unemployment today is at or near 12 per cent—and asked for the status of the employment tax credit program. In no case have application forms for employers who might seek that program reached those offices. On March 1, the minister told the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton that the program would start the next week, on March 8. Today is March 14. Why did the minister mislead the House and the people of Canada on the effective date of the employment tax credit program?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, when the program was announced, as I said in the House, I checked, before the end of the question period, with the department of manpower and immigration which was handling the administration of the program. They said that the program was to start on the day that I told the House of Commons. The

Oral Questions

program has been in place since that time. As to how many applications there are in the different offices, the legislation is in place, the regulations are in place and everything is in place. It is up to the private sector to take advantage of the program.

I should like to point out that the hon. member has not referred to the fact that unemployment decreased in all provinces of Canada last month except provinces where there is a Tory administration.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, this minister continues to try to play cute little political games while more and more Canadians are put out of work. The fact is that the forms for this program are not in the offices where they would do the most good. This program was promised first in February, and the government failed on that; it was promised in March, and they failed on that. What we want to know is when application forms will be available in these Ontario cities, the industrial heartland of the country, where the policies of this government are creating unemployment rates now in excess of 11 per cent and 12 per cent.

When will it be possible for Canadians who are looking for this government program in order to find a job to have forms they can work on? Will the minister give me a date? He has given us two that were wrong. He should give us a date that Canadians can rely on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I said and I want to repeat that the program is already in force at this moment. If some offices have not yet received those forms, I will inquire of my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and see to it that the necessary steps be taken. The act and regulations have been adopted and the program is in place. If there are any administrative problems, we will make sure that they are corrected with the shortest delay.

* * *

[*English*]

MANPOWER

MEASURES TO CREATE JOBS

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In the context of what is perceived by everybody except this government as an emergency situation, tragic in its proportions for human suffering, given the statutory responsibility that is the minister's, and in view of the failure of the Minister of Finance to bring in a new budget with the necessary stimulative measures to get the economy moving, what advice is the minister prepared to give his colleagues, now that there are over one million people, officially, unemployed in this country or, in real terms, 1.6 million? Surely the minister has some responsibility in this.

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, most assuredly, the government has