

Inquiries of the Ministry

10 per cent in the rate of unemployment insurance payments. Is he aware of the fact that in spite of the definite promise by his government the 10 per cent increase is not going in all cases to those who are unemployed?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously, we increased unemployment insurance benefits by 10 per cent. Although this is an administrative function of the Department of Labour, I assume that this increase is going to the people who are unemployed and drawing unemployment insurance.

Mr. MacInnis: I have a further supplementary.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond on a supplementary question, but I notice that there are ten or 15 members rising to ask supplementary questions on the same subject. The Chair will soon have to make a decision on whether we should spend the whole question period discussing this important matter.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to hon. members that this is a decision the Chair will have to make. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond.

Mr. MacInnis: Does the minister not consider that his position as Minister of Finance makes it incumbent upon him to carry out the definite promise made by the government in respect of the payment of unemployment insurance to the unemployed—and that should be enough to wipe the grin off the Prime Minister's face.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

UNEMPLOYMENT—EASING OF WORK PERIOD REQUIREMENT FOR MANPOWER RETRAINING

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker. I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In view of the high unemployment rate among young people in Canada, will the minister say whether he is considering amending the manpower regulations in order that young people with less than three years in the labour force can qualify for retraining assistance?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do not think anything has changed since we had the last discussion on this matter.

Mr. Baldwin: The rate of unemployment has changed.

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT—SUGGESTED REDUCTION OF INTEREST RATES ON LOANS TO PROVINCES

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Finance a supplementary question.

[Mr. MacInnis.]

In view of the answer he gave earlier to the effect that his government was trying to provide supplementary funds to help the provinces and municipalities undertake some public works, and considering the outrageous interest that provinces and municipalities will have to pay, does the minister intend to offer the loans at a much lower interest rate so as to enable municipalities and provinces to achieve their projects and, at the same time, reduce the unemployment rate?

[English]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the loan fund is intended to do. It will be included in the estimates to be presented to the House very soon. We will be turning the funds over to the provinces as soon as they require them to move forward with their projects.

UNEMPLOYMENT—FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICIES TO COMBAT PROBLEM REGIONALLY

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Atlantic provinces have an unemployment rate of 10.2 per cent, with an unemployment rate in one province of 13.9 per cent, and in view of the fact that Quebec has an unemployment rate of 10 per cent and British Columbia has an unemployment rate of 9.4 per cent, with a 2 per cent increase on the Prairies is the government contemplating the adoption of fiscal and monetary policies to combat this serious and chronic problem at the regional level?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we have been doing through our regional development program, through the ARDA program, through the manpower retraining program, and recently in my budget through the program for special loans with the larger amounts going to the areas that have higher unemployment.

Mr. Lundrigan: May I ask the Prime Minister, who has sat there for the last 20 minutes with a grin on his face, as my hon. friend said—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has the floor to ask a question. If he does not want to do this, we should move on as quickly as we can.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it is inconceivable that the Prime Minister of our country should sit there grinning all through the question period.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Are the minister's manpower retraining facilities available to the Minister of Finance so that he can retrain for a new job when he resigns?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.