

philosophy and policy with regard to the development of the Atlantic economy?

Mr. Lessard: Mr. Speaker, the development program we have at present with each of the provinces is a very flexible mechanism. It can respond to any firm proposal from individuals as well as provincial governments. Through that mechanism we are engaged in promoting development of the area. We are in full consultation and cooperating with the provinces and private industry in this matter.

ECONOMIC COUNCIL STATEMENT LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT
EIGHT PER CENT UNTIL 1980—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a related question for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. It concerns the lack of concern shown by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance regarding the state of our unemployed. The minister is probably aware of this report which was recently released by the Economic Council of Canada. It states that even with the measures announced in October by the federal Minister of Finance, the unemployment rate will probably remain above the eight per cent level until the 1980's. In my view, that means we will be faced with an eight per cent unemployment rate until 1980 affecting some 1.3 million people. Does the minister agree with that statement? If not, what is the rate and the target that his government is proceeding with right now?

● (1502)

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): I have not seen the report the hon. member quoted; it was issued only this morning. But we are working on a joint effort with provincial governments all over Canada, particularly in the Atlantic provinces, in conjunction with the private enterprise system. That is what we are doing. It is not only our responsibility. It is a responsibility shared with all three elements involved. We are doing everything possible to expand the opportunities available, to bring about development and reduce the number of the unemployed. It is not an easy task, but we are facing it.

Mr. Alexander: I wish the minister would quit foot dragging with me. I asked him a specific question. I asked him whether he accepts the statement of the Economic Council that we shall be faced with unemployment running at over eight per cent until the 1980s, and, if he disagrees with it, what target is the government considering. Don't play games, Sir. This is a very serious matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lessard: I am not playing any games with the hon. gentleman. I am not agreeing with any figures. What I am aiming to do is to reduce unemployment. There is no set level in my mind. My level will be enough jobs for all who wish to work.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Privilege—Mr. Baldwin

PRIVILEGE

MR. BALDWIN—ALLEGED "BUGGING" OF MEMBERS' OFFICES—
PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS

Mr. Speaker: Order. There are two procedural matters outstanding. There is the question of privilege raised by the Leader of the Opposition on Thursday of last week concerning remarks made by the Prime Minister, and there is also the point of order raised by the hon. member for St. John's East concerning documents allegedly cited by the Solicitor General and by the Prime Minister. It would be appropriate, perhaps, to take first the question of privilege which is outstanding. A contribution was made initially by the Leader of the Opposition, while reserving his right to make further argument. Perhaps we might hear further argument at this time. I might add that the motion outstanding on the question of privilege is in the name of the hon. member for Peace River. The hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I was, of course, following the excellent and wise course taken by the Leader of the Opposition when he first rose on this question. Despite all my yammering, friends opposite may say, it was legitimately and properly raised by the Leader of the Opposition who, unlike the Prime Minister does feel the House of Commons has an important part to play.

This is a very precise case, and the facts are fairly simple. I think probably the Prime Minister lost his cool. However, he has had an opportunity to cool off in the Bahamas. He should have taken the advice he so often gives to other people, to go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. At any rate, the Prime Minister, as reported at page 600 of *Hansard*, said this:

They can stand in their places and challenge them, if they have the courage, but I would suggest the way to do it is not by hiring private detectives, as that party does, and not by having some phony bugs planted in their office, which is the way they do it.

The right hon. gentleman might have been in a mood of impotence—

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Baldwin: —or political frustration. Leaders of governments often get into that position, especially when their governments are like the one he leads, and I sympathize with him in this respect. But when the statement to which I have just referred was called to the attention of the Prime Minister by the leader of my party, he saw fit to compound his offence by saying:

I have not, of course, said that he has been involved. I said the inference might be that members of the other party, no one particular person but the party itself—

After that, the Minister of Justice rose and said, in the course of a limited intervention, that what had been complained of constituted a criminal offence. Put those two together and there is no other inference to be drawn than that the Prime Minister was suggesting that members of Her