

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

Mr. Burton: Will the minister inform the House when the level of unemployment in the Atlantic provinces was higher than in the month of April, namely 11.6 per cent—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Portage.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Gerald Richard Cobbe (Portage): My question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce who is responsible for the census. Can the minister inform the House if the number of people leaving the province of Manitoba exceeds the unemployed?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

ATLANTIC PROVINCES—REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): My question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In light of the fact that the number of employed persons in the Atlantic provinces dropped by 3,000 in the month of April and the number of unemployed persons increased by 5,000, indicating that the economy of the Atlantic region is contracting rather than expanding, will the minister assure the House that he will immediately review the policies of his department on an urgent basis so that the name of his department can be justified?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, for the figures quoted to have any sense, one must absolutely consider how the whole national economy is faring. Obviously, the Atlantic provinces have felt the effects of what has gone on at the national level, but when we speak of regional disparities it is a matter of finding out where the relative situation of the Atlantic provinces has improved or worsened, and I say it has improved.

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[English]

CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

STEPS TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): In view of the verification by welfare officials in the city of Sydney and by the executive of the Metropolitan Development Committee for Action in the city of Sydney that unemployment at the present time on Cape Breton Island amounts to 25 per cent—and this has been surveyed—can the minister tell us what steps the Cape Breton Development Corporation is taking or plans to take soon to reduce this unemployment figure?

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I would have no one think that I am pleased with the rate of unemployment, whether it be 10, 15 or 20 per cent. Obviously, I am not. Every program we have prepared is intended to remedy the present situation in Sydney.

[English]

Mr. Muir: I don't know whether other members understood it, but to me the translation was absolutely terrible; I could not figure out what the reply was. In any event, I doubt whether the minister said anything of importance.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member will recognize that there are only a few seconds left before the end of the question period. Perhaps he might ask his supplementary?

Mr. Muir: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I shall be pleased to ask the minister a supplementary. Would the minister, on the first occasion he is available outside his own constituency, go to Sydney and meet with the officials of the Cape Breton Metropolitan Committee for Action as they request, and advise them what is going to be done regarding the mass unemployment and starvation in the Cape Breton area?

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question put a while ago, I would say to the hon. member that to get an intelligent reply he should ask an intelligent question.

In reply to the second part of that question, I am quite willing to meet those people who wish to see me to discuss the serious problems in the Atlantic provinces.

[English]

Mr. Muir: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the minister is reflecting on the clergy, on union leaders and on business leaders who are involved in the work of this committee. They think these questions are intelligent. However, if the hon. gentleman wishes to advise these people that they are ignorant, that is his affair.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Orders of the day. I appreciate there are many hon. members who have not had an opportunity to ask their questions. I tried to keep the question period moving as quickly as I could but I was not entirely successful. I apologize to hon. members on that account, but perhaps other questions might be asked tomorrow.

Mr. Nesbitt: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression, though perhaps I was mistaken, that Your Honour had actually recognized me a few minutes ago.

Mr. Speaker: That is not a very good point of order. I did recognize the hon. member but he was pre-empted when I thought the hon. member for Cape Breton-The