

[Translation]

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—MEASURES TO
ACCELERATE APPROVAL OF PROJECTS

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question.

In view of the increased number of unemployed, especially in the province of Quebec, does the hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration intend to ask officials to proceed more rapidly with the study of local initiative projects so they can be undertaken as soon as possible thus creating jobs and decreasing unemployment?

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have been trying to speed this up regularly over the last month and a half. I think nearly all the decisions are made, although it is my intention to transfer some funds from the amount reserved for what we call the business, co-operative and entrepreneurial LIP program to the regular LIP program, plus the transfer of \$10 million from the on-the-job training program to the local initiatives program, not because the on-the-job training program is not a good one but because we think we can put people to work faster under the circumstances through the local initiatives program.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Don Valley on a supplementary.

Mr. Gillies: My question is not exactly a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, but I should like to put it anyway.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member's honesty, but obviously there is no reward for that quality. I believe the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings has a supplementary.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: You bet your sweet life he has.

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FINANCE

MEASURES TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT LEVEL

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary to the Prime Minister in connection with a previous question. Since the Prime Minister has stated privately that it would be unrealistic to expect the government to be able to reduce unemployment below a 5 per cent level, is he now prepared to give consideration to the policies put forward by the Official Opposition for reducing unemployment well below that figure?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I wish, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member had shown more of that virtue that you recognized in the hon. member for Don Valley.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Don Valley.

An hon. Member: Honesty has its rewards after all!

FIGHTING OF INFLATION OR REDUCTION OF
UNEMPLOYMENT—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Since there now seems to be a surplus in the budget, I should like to ask the hon. gentleman whether the policy of the government has been to fight inflation rather than to solve the unemployment problem?

• (1430)

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that my priority is jobs. When he refers to a surplus he is misleading the House in the sense that he knows that the surplus or deficit position of the government is measured by the total fiscal and monetary stance, namely, budgetary and non-budgetary. I have said to the House that the fiscal or budgetary stance of the government would be \$2 billion, and that remains very close to the figure that I will be able to report to the House.

Mr. Gillies: Is it the position of the Minister of Finance and the government that one can fight unemployment and really operate the economy, at a time of 6.7 per cent unemployment, with a balanced budget or a slight deficit?

SUGGESTED MEETING OF FEDERAL AND ATLANTIC
PROVINCES FINANCE MINISTERS ON MEASURES TO BE
INCLUDED IN BUDGET TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. Will the minister meet with the finance ministers of the four Atlantic provinces before bringing down his budget so that he can discuss measures to be included in his budget that will do something about the stagnating economy in the Atlantic provinces, which I might say is a direct result of the monetary and fiscal policies of this government—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: —and programs can be introduced by the government to alleviate the very serious and critically high unemployment problem in the Atlantic region?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, despite the argumentative nature of the hon. gentleman's question, may I say I do not minimize the problem in Newfoundland at all. I had some very good conversations with the Minister of Finance of Newfoundland both at the federal-provincial finance ministers conference on January 18 and 19 and again last week in a private meeting with Mr. Crosbie.

Mr. McGrath: In view of the fact that there seems to be no change in the unemployment situation in the Atlantic provinces, and in view of the budget that is going to be presented to the House on February 19, will the minister