

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not admit the premises of the question. If they were correct, it would be difficult to explain why the hon. member's party in Quebec did not do any better than it did. Surely, he must be communicating with the NDP members in Quebec.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

REQUEST THAT QUESTION OF FULL EMPLOYMENT BE PUT ON
AGENDA OF PREMIERS' CONFERENCE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): It is precisely that attitude, Mr. Speaker, that defeated a man named Bourassa. You have got two years to go, maybe. I should like to ask the Prime Minister, since unemployment has been running nationally at more than 7 per cent for more than 19 months and it is over 10 per cent in the province of Quebec, and since we have a first ministers' conference scheduled for early December, whether he would get in touch with the premiers, including the new premier of the province of Quebec who does want to do something about the real problems of the people in his province, and put on the agenda for that conference a discussion of full employment in which the Prime Minister would show some leadership and try and get the support of all the premiers to deal with this pressing issue?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Well, Mr. Speaker, I have just indicated a couple of answers back that I would be communicating with the provinces to learn what items they wanted to see on the agenda. Obviously, in our minds there is one item, which will be the economy, and I am very glad that the hon. member is beginning to realize the importance of that item too.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT—POSSIBILITY OF SPECIAL MEASURES TO
DEAL WITH PROBLEM

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I must say the Prime Minister's condescension is touching. I address my supplementary to the finance minister. Given the fact that his own officials have forecast a level of job creation during the coming winter months which is the lowest in ten years, would the finance minister now tell the House whether he has reconsidered the answers he has given in the House in the past couple of weeks, and will be prepared to bring before the House special measures which will ensure a higher rate of job creation in the coming winter months, a winter which will see the highest level of unemployment since the great depression in this country?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the underlying facts of the Canadian economic situation remain the same today as they have for many weeks. We have, and must have, a concern about the rate of inflation in

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Canada which over any period of time will be far more damaging to job creation in Canada than any of the other difficulties we face. The leader of the New Democratic Party shakes his head. He presumably is not concerned about inflation but for this government it remains a primary concern.

I said last week and repeated this week, that indeed in dealing with the inflation problem in Canada we have a very narrow margin within which we could take additional spending measures or make taxation changes given the importance of overcoming inflation. That continues to be the reality. My colleague, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, and other colleagues and I have been analyzing the various ways in which specific programs may be directed to those specific members of the work force who have been in a particularly difficult situation in respect of employment. But I am not proposing at this time general economic measures which might work against the over-all policy of the government against inflation.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ALLEGED EFFORTS OF COMMISSION TO DISQUALIFY
BENEFICIARIES

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Considering that an increasing number of applicants are declared ineligible by Unemployment Insurance Commission officials, pursuant to sections 25(a) and (b) of the Unemployment Insurance Act, and Regulations 164 and 166 of this act, although those applicants are actively seeking employment, would the minister advise the House whether or not special instructions were given to the officials for stricter enforcement of the law and its regulations in view of making as many applicants as possible ineligible for benefits?

Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): No, Mr. Speaker.

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

Would the minister inform the House whether he deems it reasonable to turn down an applicant who has been trying to find a job but did not succeed because employment is getting increasingly scarce?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked for an opinion; it is not easy to answer this question in the House.