

Minister of Veterans Affairs. Will the report of the group which studied the basic rate of the disability pension that is paid under the Pension Act be acted upon by the government at an early date or, if not, will it be referred as soon as possible to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Just as soon as the committee has been formed I shall be referring that report to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs for study as the first order.

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MANPOWER

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—PRIORITY OF APPLICATIONS BY MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration in charge of the local initiatives program. Has the hon. gentleman given a directive to the officials in charge of this program that applications from municipalities should receive a lower priority than those from individuals? Why does this seem to be the case?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): They have not received such a directive. Applications from municipalities compete with applications from private organizations.

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CANADA LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD

REQUEST THAT REPRESENTATIVE OF WESTERN CANADA BE APPOINTED

Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta): Can the Prime Minister or the Minister of Labour please advise us why no western Canadian was appointed to the new Canada Labour Relations Board?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): I shall be pleased to check into that matter and report back to the hon. member.

Mr. Hees: You know why.

Mr. Reynolds: Will the minister undertake to make sure that a representative of western Canada is appointed to that board should an oversight have taken place?

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MANPOWER

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN RETRAINING PROGRAMS IN 1972

Mr. Reg. Stackhouse (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Can the minister tell the House how many people received the benefit of federally-funded retraining programs in 1972, or any part of that year—

The Address—Mr. R. Stewart

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I respectfully suggest to the hon. member that this question should be placed upon the order paper.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT—INQUIRY AS TO ACCEPTANCE OF ECONOMIC COUNCIL TARGET BY GOVERNMENT

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It relates to his concern about unemployment in human terms. As the hon. gentleman is aware, the Economic Council of Canada has set a target of 4.5 per cent with respect to maximum acceptable unemployment. Would the minister advise the House and the people of Canada whether he has accepted this direction from the Economic Council as being the target upon which the government should set its sights?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): That is one of 15 targets the Economic Council recommended as subjects for discussion between the federal and provincial governments. The hon. gentleman's leader has already said he does not accept that figure.

Mr. Alexander: I appreciate the speech which the minister has made to me but I just want an answer to a simple question in order that we can determine in which direction the government is going. Does the minister accept the target for unemployment of 4.5 per cent, I believe, set by the Economic Council of Canada? That is all I am asking. Yes or no?

• (1150)

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have already dealt with that subject in human terms rather than in statistical terms.

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SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Monday, January 8, consideration of the motion of Mr. J. J. Blais for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stanfield (p. 52).

Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, I did not expect the complete attention of the House but I expected that at least my loudspeaker would be on.

When the clock struck ten last evening I was attempting to point out that the present system of non-specific election dates is a tradition we can no longer afford. Like so many other traditions, we have maintained it simply because it is traditional. I do not believe it is fair to the people of Canada and it is something the House could easily change.