

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I have been accused of distorting the facts and this is a very serious accusation. I would like to know where is the distortion in my statement that the average unemployment rate had decreased in the Atlantic area as compared with that of the whole country. The hon. member accused me of misrepresentation. This is serious and I think he should stop lying to the House.

[English]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again we are dealing with an argument between the hon. member and the minister. The minister gives statistics to the House. The hon. member says the statistics are inexact. The minister claims that they are correct. This kind of matter will never be resolved by a question of privilege or a point of order.

Mr. McGrath: I rise on a question of privilege. I said and I maintain that the figures in the Atlantic provinces for the past 10 years show that the minister cannot take any credit for any trend in the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McGrath: Also, the present figures indicate that unemployment is rising.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McGrath: The minister should resign.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McGrath: The minister should resign.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I realize that the hon. member for Malpeque is anxious to ask a question or a supplementary, whatever the case may be, but I think I should recognize the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate who has been trying to get the floor for a while.

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FINANCE

REQUEST FOR EARLY STATEMENT ON ECONOMIC POLICIES

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Perhaps I can get an intellectually honest answer from the Minister of Finance. In lieu of the budget speech to be made in June, and in view of the present crisis, is the minister prepared to amend the date for his statement to the House and the country and either tomorrow or early next week make a definitive statement on the review, reconstruction and rethinking of the government's economic policies? In view of the fact that the Prime Minister will soon be leaving for Russia and will be out of the country for several weeks, the country is in need of some kind of statement now indicating whether there are any new plans or thoughts on the part of the government that can help Canadians at least to regain confidence in the economy.

Inquiries of the Ministry

An hon. Member: That is not a question. It is a speech.

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): At present it is my intention to present a budget some time in the first half of June.

Mr. Lundrigan: I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact the Prime Minister is not prepared to change his plans to travel to the Soviet Union, will he make a statement on motions tomorrow indicating some of the new plans, new economic policies, new employment policies and new taxation thinking on the part of the government to give some rejuvenation to the Canadian people during this period of crisis?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Regina East.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure whether the hon. member is rising on a point of order or to ask a question. If he intends to suggest that the Prime Minister was about to rise that was not my impression, and I am the one who has to be guided. The hon. member for Regina East.

Mr. Burton: My supplementary question is for the—

Mr. Lundrigan: A point of order—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate rises on a point of order.

Mr. Lundrigan: Perhaps the Prime Minister did not hear my question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Regina East.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN PROGRAMS

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In view of the statement by the Prime Minister in a recent interview suggesting that the concept of full employment involves differing levels of unemployment, such as Ontario 1 per cent and the Atlantic provinces 5 per cent, can the minister indicate if this is the approach being followed by his department in its programs?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, as has been stated in the House, the objective of the department is to reduce disparities in Canada. Disparity means that a situation is not equal to another when compared with it and the purpose of the department is to reduce the disparity between extremes. We were successful in doing this, as I indicated earlier.