

*Oral Questions*

deficit around to one which would at least put Canada on a basis of parity with the United States?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance):** The government of Canada, principally under the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, is examining the current operations of the auto pact and the most recent performance under the auto pact and would anticipate some time later in the year being in a position to make some decisions with regard to the future of the arrangement. At the moment, I cannot be any more enlightening to the hon. member than to say that this is receiving very active study within the government.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister confirm that, according to figures which have not yet been released, for the first time in the history of the auto pact we are running a deficit for the first three months in 1976 in vehicle trade with the United States which, if it continues, will mean that the situation in terms of the over-all trade for this year will be considerably worse than it was even last year?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to check that figure.

CANADIAN SHARE OF INVESTMENT RESULTING FROM AUTO PACT

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Can the minister tell the House why the government has not insisted up to this point—or why it is going to wait for a few months perhaps—that Canada get its share of new investment in that industry which is at least proportionate to the amount we consume in terms of the output, the most recent figures indicating that Canadians consume about 10 per cent of the output in the industry but we only got something less than 6 per cent of the investment last year?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance):** I can say to the House that the former minister of industry, trade and commerce had insisted on just such a recognition of Canada's role in the auto pact. Our proposal is to make a full analysis of the facts leading to some further decisions as to what we would do about this arrangement.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

PROPOSED ABOLITION OF REGULATION DISQUALIFYING THOSE WHO WORK MORE THAN FOUR AND LESS THAN EIGHT WEEKS

**Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Would the minister tell us if he plans to make an early proposal regarding the abolition of the disqualifying practice which makes a recipient of unemployment insurance not eligible for four consecutive weeks. I believe we call this "card breaking"; it consists of disqualifying recipients who are in their extension period if they work more than four but less than eight weeks, given the fact that this

[Mr. Broadbent.]

procedure is considered inefficient and unfair even by Unemployment Insurance Commission officials.

[English]

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, that very issue is being examined with considerable interest. I cannot make a commitment now as to if or when the change will be made, but it is one of the major suggestions we are examining with considerable interest.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT—MEASURES TO ASSIST YOUNG PEOPLE—ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF JOBS TO BE CREATED

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. I had a question for the Minister of Public Works regarding the ganging up theory, but in light of the fact that recent unemployment figures are in and around the neighbourhood of 7 per cent, affecting some 800,000 people, and in light of the fact that this summer will be a very difficult one for our young people in terms of employment, I wonder if the Minister of Finance could advise whether he is aware of this and whether we can expect some new, imaginative and bold steps—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

**Mr. Alexander:** —in order to reduce this unemployment, and in particular, to assist our young people this summer?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the difficult situation and the unemployment figures. I am particularly concerned about the fact that through much of this year we will continue to be in a difficult situation in that regard. Of course, any program proposed by the hon. gentleman would involve a very substantial increase in government expenditure, and I have listened equally carefully to the hon. gentlemen when they have said the federal government should reduce its present rate of spending below 16 per cent.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Alexander:** I reject that cop out by the minister and indicate that there are certain priorities.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Alexander:** All I can say to the minister is that he is off the track somewhat. However, I will ask him another question. The former minister always indicated in this House in a gentlemanly way the number of jobs he expected to be created in any particular year. Would the minister give us the benefit of his wisdom in this regard and indicate just how many jobs he expects will be created this year as a result of the programs of this government.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** It seems to me that if there is any cop out, it is by the hon. gentleman.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!