

this confidential report will be made public so that the House and the public can study it?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not know about this report but I will ask the minister to look into it and to provide my hon. friend with an answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have just about reached the end of the question period but the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster for a last question.

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TRANSPORT

SUGGESTED FULL USE OF EASTERN CANADIAN PORTS FOR GRAIN EXPORTS

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport which I tried to ask earlier. Would the minister check to see that there is full utilization of eastern Canadian ports for grain exports? We all know that the St. Lawrence is frozen over, but there is storage at the port of Saint John and these facilities for the storage of grain are not being fully utilized.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to do that. Generally speaking, I think the record shows that use of the port has been on the increase in recent years, and I shall try to keep it rising.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day. Is the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre rising on a point of order?

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Before we begin today's debate I wonder whether I could indicate that we are suggesting no change in the time limits provided in Standing Order 58(13). You will find, however, that there is agreement among the four House leaders that no one take any overtime today.

Mr. Speaker: I take it then that there is a standing instruction agreed to unanimously that the Chair is not to allow overtime to hon. members even if they seek it at that time with unanimous agreement.

Mr. Baldwin: Anybody who does should go in the penalty box.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Regional Development

• (1200)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—ALLEGED FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO ALLEVIATE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DISPARITY

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this House condemns the government for the disastrous failure of its regional development programmes to make any progress in eliminating regional disparities and, in particular, condemns the government for the lack of planning or strategy in its programs, for its total reliance on give-away grants to private corporations, most of them foreign owned, for the senseless practice of transplanting unemployment by assisting plants in one location while similar plants are being closed in another location and for the wasteful expenditure of large sums of public funds without appreciable results in jobs and economic development in the disadvantaged areas of Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to say immediately, so that the position is clear, that I and my colleagues appreciate that the problem of regional disparity is a very difficult one. Indeed, it is a universal problem. There is hardly a country I know anything about in which there are not disparities among regions and in which there have not been considerable difficulties in getting rid of those disparities.

I also want to say immediately, so that there is no misunderstanding, that my colleagues and I do not question the sincerity of the minister in charge nor do we question his genuine concern about the objectives which his department is supposed to serve. My complaint is not that the minister and the department have not performed miracles. My complaint is that the department is now in a shambles, that the programs have proven themselves to be relatively worthless, and that hundreds of millions of dollars have been handed out to large corporations with relatively little result in jobs and in changes in the situation in the disadvantaged areas of this country. It is not that he has not performed miracles or has not accomplished what should take 15 years in about three years. It is a fact that there is no evidence in the department's plans and programs of any useful industrial or economic strategy or plan for the disadvantaged regions of this country. There is evidence of a department that has amounts of money it can use and has officials sitting more or less in a passive way waiting for applications from corporations and offering grants on the basis of those applications. I will come back to that in a moment.

I want to make another statement which may be one which removes some of the blame from the minister and the department. I appreciate that the minister's policy was doomed, almost from the start, to utter failure by the general economic policies of this government. The moment the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his advisors were ready to create massive unemployment in this country, the moment they were ready to slow down the economy and the moment they were ready to tighten all the various situations that would have made the economy go, the poor minister and his department were doomed to failure because in a situation of general economic deflation obviously the disadvantaged areas are hurt more