

The Budget—Mr. Riis

know that he would not reach that point. That is why he can give us the examples he gave.

The Hon. Member read statistics about the unemployment rates in Canada. I will do the same thing only I will draw a distinction between the unemployment rates when this Government took office and the unemployment rates now, and we will see what has happened.

Let us start with Newfoundland. In September, 1984, the unemployment rate was 23.8 per cent. That was under a Liberal Government. Under a Progressive Conservative Government, the unemployment rate is down to 19.2 per cent. In New Brunswick, under a Liberal Government in September, 1984, the unemployment rate was 16.2 per cent. It is now—

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am happy to listen to my friend, the Hon. Minister of State for Youth (Mr. Charest), but that is exactly the same document from which he read in his speech and when he was questioning a speaker from the Liberal Party. Do you think it is proper that he should repeat the same thing again for the third time this afternoon, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not know if it is the same document or not. I would like to hear the Minister. I am sure the Hon. Minister will enlighten us.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his compliment. For him to make an intervention in an attempt to stop me obviously says a lot about what is going on here. Now, to get back to business, where were we? I think we were in New Brunswick, were we not?

Mr. Benjamin: Where you were an hour ago.

Mr. Charest: Under a Liberal administration in September, 1984, the unemployment rate in New Brunswick was 16.2 per cent. Under a Progressive Conservative Government, it has gone down to 13.9 per cent. In the great Province of Quebec—

[Translation]

—Mr. Speaker, under a Liberal administration, the unemployment rate was 12.9 per cent on September 4, 1984. Under a Progressive Conservative Government, it has declined to the current 10.8 per cent rate as of January 1987.

[English]

In Ontario, the unemployment rate was 9.4 per cent in September, 1984. It has now gone down to 6.6 per cent under a Progressive Conservative Government. In Manitoba, under a Liberal administration, the unemployment rate was 9 per cent. Under a Progressive Conservative Government, it has gone down to 7.9 per cent. In September, 1984, under a Liberal administration, the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan was 8.7 per cent, but under a Progressive Conservative Government, the unemployment rate went down to 7.3 per cent. Would you guess, Mr. Speaker, that in your own Province of Alberta, under a Liberal administration in September, 1984,

the unemployment rate was 12.1 per cent? Yet under a Progressive Conservative Government it is down to 10.8 per cent. In British Columbia, the home province of the NDP House Leader, it was 15.1 per cent under the Liberals in September of 1984. Under our Government it is down to 13.6 per cent. In Canada as a whole, the unemployment rate was 11.7 per cent in September, 1984—I think the Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate (Mr. Baker) fell asleep.

• (1610)

Mr. Baker: No.

Mr. Charest: Perhaps I could speak a little louder. It was 11.7 per cent under the Liberal Government in September, 1984. Under this Government it is down to 9.7 per cent.

I am going to add a caveat and tell the Hon. NDP Member that this does not mean we are satisfied. He knows that. We have to work harder. However, in no way can he get up in this House and say that there has not been progress under this Government.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that the Hon. Member has a point.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Riis: A very small point. The unemployment rate in 1984 was excessively high. The people of Canada saw it that way and decided there was a need for a change in government. They swept out the Liberals and replaced them with a new group. This new group says they are making gains, and the Minister of Finance says he plans to stay the course. He is not going to change anything. I have to admit there was a downward movement in unemployment statistically. However, people in British Columbia, more specifically in Kamloops—Shuswap, take cold comfort when he tells us things are improving. There is literally no recognition of that. There is no question that in some parts of Canada there has been improvement, mainly in downtown Toronto. To be fair, last year the unemployment rate in Canada was 9.8 per cent. This year, 12 months later, it is 9.7 per cent. When you add up all the jobs, there were actually 5,000 fewer people on the unemployment insurance rolls after one year of that Government in office. At that rate, as I reminded the Hon. Member, it will take 270 years to eliminate unemployment. The Hon. Member might feel he can stay the course with a reduction like that, but we do not accept it. The people of Canada did not accept it when the Liberals were in government, and the polls indicate they do not accept it now that the Conservatives are in government. The solution is obvious, people have to vote for the NDP at the first opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): One very short question and a short rebuttal, please.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Speaker, I want to stick to one particular point. The Hon. Member asked how low the Government can go. I ask him, how low can the NDP go?