

Inquiries of the Ministry

Insurance Commission indicate that claims are being handled at approximately the same rate as this time last year.

Mr. Nesbitt: A supplementary question. I request the minister to use his good offices with the commission to see if they can provide him with more accurate information.

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—REQUEST FOR
RECONVENING OF FINANCE MINISTERS' CONFERENCE
TO DEAL WITH PROSPECTIVE WINTER SITUATION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In light of the fact that the statistics released today by Statistics Canada indicate that we are going to have a serious rate of unemployment this winter, as an immediate step will the Prime Minister consider reconvening the finance ministers' conference to deal with this situation?

• (2:40 p.m.)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): There are periodic meetings—I believe three or four times a year—of the finance ministers. There was one in the middle of the summer so there is probably another coming up soon. I do not see any need to reconvene one. I will inquire when the next meeting is to be. The suggestion was made by one of the hon. member's friends that I meet with the premiers, and I repeat that that is what I am working at now.

Mr. McGrath: A further supplementary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for St. John's East will probably recognize that there are still a number of hon. members who are anxious to ask questions on this subject. I would hope that each member individually would try to limit his supplementaries. I am sure hon. members will recognize that this might be helpful to all concerned.

Mr. McGrath: If there is to be a conference either of premiers or of finance ministers to deal with the critical unemployment situation, would the Prime Minister consider having placed on the agenda of such a meeting the question of a winter works program and a cost-sharing formula in connection therewith?

Mr. Trudeau: I am sure this idea will crop up somewhere without the subject being placed on the agenda. Only the general subjects are placed on the agenda; we do not try to detail all the brain children that spring from various parts of the country.

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT
ON ECONOMIC OUTLOOK, GOALS AND PROJECTIONS

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): In order to help those who have been swamped by the surge in the economy and hopefully to restore some confidence in the economy, does the Prime Minister intend to make a full statement on the economic outlook and the government's goals and projections with regard to employment and inflation.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Not at this time, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Mackasey.]

Mr. Nowlan: Does the government have any goals and projections regarding employment and inflation?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, to part of the question, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. Member: What part?

UNEMPLOYMENT IN QUEBEC—SPECIFIC ACTION TO
DEAL WITH PROBLEM THIS WINTER

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): In light of the forecast by the Minister of Finance of Quebec that unemployment in Quebec this coming winter will likely reach 13.5 per cent, a record high if I am not mistaken, outside of absolute depression, can the Prime Minister inform the House, given the political sensitivity of Quebec within confederation at this time, whether or not the government is taking a specific approach for the coming winter in terms of dealing with unemployment in that province?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am not sure what figures the hon. member is quoting. I believe he is referring to a figure which was given by the Quebec minister in the eventuality that the measures of the Nixon administration take their full effect, but as the hon. member knows there is legislation before the House through which we hope to prevent those measures having full effect on employment in Canada.

Mr. Broadbent: Is the Prime Minister seriously suggesting that \$80 million spread throughout Canada—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that this is debate.

UNEMPLOYMENT—SPECIAL CABINET COMMITTEE TO
DEVISE PROGRAM TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT THIS
WINTER

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Has a new and special cabinet committee been charged with the specific responsibility of directing the efforts of government and its related departments toward a massive employment-creating program this winter? If so, who heads and co-ordinates the committee and what are its terms of reference?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): We do not usually communicate information relative to internal administrative changes within the government, but if it is helpful to the hon. member I can tell him there is no such special committee.

Mr. Lundrigan: On the basis of that answer I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he has directed any government departments, such as Public Works, Regional Economic Expansion, Manpower and Immigration and Finance, to concentrate their energies on massive employment-creating programs this winter and, if so, can he indicate in a general way the nature of this direction?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, I have so directed such ministers and a few others besides to find an answer to the problem about which both the hon. member and myself are concerned.