

Inquiries of the Ministry

corporation, has laid off between 400 and 500 employees at this particular time, thus setting a very undesirable example—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have two reservations about the hon. member's additional question. I have some doubts whether it is a supplementary question. I think that the hon. member is really taking advantage of the opportunity to ask a supplementary question dealing generally with unemployment to ask a supplementary question not immediately related to the first one. Second, I have the impression that this question was asked yesterday, but if I am wrong perhaps the minister might like to reply to the hon. member's supplementary question.

Mr. Hees: May I just finish my supplementary question, Mr. Speaker? As I was about to say, this is setting a very bad example to private industry at the present time.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport has been discussing this situation with Air Canada and perhaps he could be permitted to reply.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the House, I believe on Wednesday, I have meetings with Air Canada scheduled for Monday of next week, but up to now I have been following the exemplary conduct of the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings when he held this portfolio in keeping my distance, as it were, from Air Canada internal management matters. However, there are some basic questions involved here and I have undertaken to consult with the highest level of management of Air Canada to see if a solution can be worked out.

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister of Transport also discuss with Air Canada at the same time the proposed transfer of the reservation service from Ottawa—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): As a further supplementary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have had two supplementaries which have had little to do with the original question. I recognize they are legitimate questions but they should not be brought in as supplementaries. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

UNEMPLOYMENT—REQUEST FOR MEETING OF LABOUR,
MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the hon. member for Scarborough West in his capacity as chairman of the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. Will the hon. member consider covering a meeting of his committee so that we might invite a person like the Minister of Labour of the province of Quebec to

[Mr. Hees.]

appear before that committee to discuss with us the seriousness of the unemployment situation in the province of Quebec?

Mr. MacEachen: You know better than that, Stanley.

Mr. David Weatherhead (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I think we can take this matter up in our steering committee, but I am a bit doubtful at this time that we have any authority to do this.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): How about desire?

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

IMMEDIATE CHANGES IN REGULATIONS TO ASSIST
HARD-CORE UNEMPLOYED

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the government has any emergency plans to assist the 84,000 people who are classified as the hard-core unemployed, people who have been unemployed for more than six months, compared with the total of 46,000 last year, in view of the fact that most of them cannot qualify for unemployment insurance benefits and are forced to go on short-term welfare which is not adequate and certainly cannot provide a decent standard of living for their families?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is asking a question which is very general in its terms. He is inviting the minister, or someone on behalf of the ministry, to make a statement as to what plans may be contemplated by the government to alleviate the very serious situation to which he has alluded. I would think this statement ought normally to be made on motions.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, may I rephrase my question. This is an urgent matter and I think there should be some latitude so we can get a response from the Acting Prime Minister. May I ask him if there is any contemplation of immediate changes in the unemployment insurance regulations so that many of these people can qualify who do not now qualify under the old Act, and also whether any changes are contemplated in the Canada Assistance Plan with respect to assistance to the provinces, so that these people can at least survive until spring?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the government now has under consideration legislation to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act and has published a white paper on this subject. On the second point, Mr. Speaker, the ministers of welfare are meeting here in Ottawa toward the end of this month, and I repeat what I said yesterday that this subject will undoubtedly be under discussion. May I also point out that these suggestions of the hon. member can be discussed during the debate which will take place on Monday.