

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

• (2:10 p.m.)

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****HOUSING****STEPS TO STIMULATE STARTS AND PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT**

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. As the house construction industry is one of the major employers of labour in Canada and as housing starts today are 43 per cent below what they were one year ago, is the government planning to take steps in the immediate future to stimulate our housebuilding industry so that we may have not only the housing we so badly need but the employment which their construction will provide?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as to steps the government has taken, the Minister without Portfolio responsible for housing has mentioned them in the House from time to time; as to the steps the government may still take, he will make that announcement in due course.

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Speaker, of course that answer tells the country absolutely nothing.

**Mr. Trudeau:** It was not meant to.

**An hon. Member:** It was not meant to!

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. I would ask the Prime Minister, since he appears not to give a hoot about unemployment or the unemployed—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member cannot ask a question in those terms. He should ask his question.

**Mr. McIlraith:** Try again. See if you can grow up.

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Speaker, since unemployment today is 21 per cent higher than it was last year, may I ask the Prime Minister whether he has considered following the very good example set by his colleague in Quebec, Mr. Bourassa, who has said that if he is elected and cannot reduce unemployment he intends to resign?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION****PHASE-OUT OF No. 20 COLLIERY**

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a ques-

[Mr. McIlraith.]

tion to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion with respect to the activities of the Cape Breton Development Corporation and particularly with respect to No. 20 Colliery which, since the number of miners has been greatly reduced from 1,000 to barely 300, is apparently being phased out. Is it the corporation's intention to phase out this mine or, since it is one of the best mines in operation, is it the intention to go back to full production?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, we know that Devco was incorporated precisely to phase out gradually the unproductive coal mines and to keep the productive ones in operation.

Now as regards No. 20 Colliery, I can try to get information and obtain a report on the recent events to which the hon. member refers.

[*English*]

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since this is one of the most productive mines under the jurisdiction of the Cape Breton Development Corporation and since it provides a great deal of employment in Glace Bay, would the minister undertake to use his good offices to see that this operation is not phased out any further but, instead, that it is expanded?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** Mr. Speaker, I am willing to table later a report on the situation existing at No. 20 Colliery.

[*English*]

**LABOUR CONDITIONS****UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION PROGRAMS**

**Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate):** Mr. Speaker, I have a related question. Inasmuch as Treasury Board has approved new initiatives under the special areas legislation and since we have had indications in the last several days regarding the chronic unemployment situation, can the minister say whether any new activity is under way or whether any new initiatives are being taken to speed up the effect of the regional economic development programs in the various regions of