

the difficulties of Alberta to a single program. I gave a personal experience. It would have been useful to me on February 1 last year to have the support of Alberta Members on the other side of the House, and I did not get it.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: You have ruined western Canada.

EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible. Does the Deputy Prime Minister not believe that when you put a program such as the National Energy Program in place and chase out \$17 billion worth of capital, it takes jobs out of the country to some other country? Does the Deputy Prime Minister not believe that when you raise the rates on the Crow for farmers, you are going to put farmers into bankruptcy? Are those not federal policies which could be changed, which would produce jobs in the country? Will the Government change those policies?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to remind my hon. friend, who may have forgotten—his memory is very, very short on these matters—that one of the greatest supporters I had for what I was trying to introduce in the House in February of 1983 was the Government of Alberta.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN ATLANTIC REGION

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. The Minister of Finance and his mouthpiece, the Minister of State for Finance, boast that the economy is in recovery. Yet in the Atlantic region there are 8,000 more people unemployed this year than last year. The unemployment rate in the region has soared to 15.2 per cent. Industries, like Canada Packers in my own province, and others right across the region, are closing their doors. If that constitutes recovery, what in the name of Heaven constitutes recession? How bad does the situation have to get in the region before the Government will take that situation seriously?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite has indeed drawn our attention to a serious unemployment problem in his region. We know that.

Mr. Forrestall: It is about time somebody did.

Mr. MacLaren: All regions in Canada have experienced a degree of unemployment which is worrisome, and which causes us on this side of the House real concern. The Member opposite would want to recall that since the beginning of the recession Canada has achieved a remarkable record in job creation. We have also experienced an unprecedented growth in our labour force which is substantially greater than that experienced by any other industrialized country in the OECD.

Oral Questions

The Hon. Member overlooks that fact that, to a substantial degree, the continuing high level of unemployment, both in the Atlantic region and generally across Canada, is a function of the degree to which more people than before have joined the labour force in Canada.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER ASSIST IN DEVELOPING ATLANTIC REGION ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of State for Finance. Earlier in the Question Period the Minister cited projects into which the Government had poured money, including projects in the Atlantic region. Granted, the Government has supported such things as the Atlantic Regional Veterinary College in my own region. However, does the Minister not realize that the benefits from those ad hoc, short-term, make-shift programs are being negated by the Government's narrow-minded fiscal and monetary policies? If he does, will he not at least sit down, or recommend to the Minister of Finance that he sit down with the four Ministers of Finance in the Atlantic region to put together an over-all strategy for the region on a crisis basis? Will he do something concrete, rather than giving the House of Commons and the people of the Atlantic region a lecture on macro-economics?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, if the Member opposite wants me to be a little more specific, I shall. He has raised the question of special recovery projects in the Atlantic region. They have gone forward and been successful. They have created jobs. They have created the circumstances in which further private sector growth can occur. The Member opposite should realize that the spending of more than 60 per cent of the funds in that program has been completed. Ninety-six per cent of the projects are under way and they have brought a direct benefit, both to his region and to Canada generally.

In addition, as we cited earlier, the Government has provided retraining programs and other job creation programs which have had a beneficial effect in his region as well as nationally. Perhaps more important than the shorter-term projects which I have cited, and which the Member opposite drew attention to, is the fact that in Canada in the past year and one-half we have brought down inflation. We have increased productivity. We have increased our export trade. We have created the circumstances in which greater productivity and international competitiveness will occur. That is where the jobs will be created. They will be created there, and in the small business sector which will benefit from the tax incentives and the tax changes we made in the recent Budget. That is how jobs will be created in Canada as we work through this temporary high increase in people joining the job force.

Miss MacDonald: Temporary for four years.