

*Veterans Affairs***PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS***[Translation]*

DECENTRALIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Cossitt:

That an order of the House do issue for copies of all correspondence, notes, minutes of meetings and other communications relating to the decentralization of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the province of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Raymond Savard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on the move to Prince Edward Island, of the headquarters of veterans affairs and especially the economic impact of that move to Charlottetown.

The jobs moved from Ottawa to Charlottetown belong to a small group of independent organizations and programs. Each of these has a different but related and interdependent role, and all serve veterans. I would like to address the following questions: What will be the economic repercussions of the move to Charlottetown? Will there be a significant increase in the demand for goods and services? What will be the impact on demand from the move of families to Charlottetown? What will be the impact on demand from the move of the department to Charlottetown?

Economic repercussions will be felt over two different periods in addition to that of the arrival of employees. There will be first the limited period of the construction phase, then the operating phase which will be permanent as far away as we can anticipate. During each of these two phases, the economic impact will be both direct and indirect, and will derive from the demand for goods and services on the island from employees, their families and the veterans affairs headquarters.

● (1800)

As far as the construction phase of the move is concerned, studies indicate that the direct impact will be the creation of some 300 jobs. It is estimated that these 300 jobs will supply some \$500 million in salaries and wages over the construction phase. The total cost of building the new facilities for veterans affairs is estimated at some \$15 million, and in order to consider—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I must do so under the Standing Orders.

[English]

Before noticing the clock, I wonder if the Chair might be permitted the observation that the attendance in the House at this moment during private members' hour is certainly more attractive than is often the case. Perhaps the hon. member for

Leeds-Grenville (Mr. Cossitt) has caused some interest in the matter.

The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business having expired, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At 6.03 p.m. the House took recess.

● (2000)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT, 1971**

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Axworthy that Bill C-3, to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, at five o'clock when the debate was interrupted for other business I had reminded the House and the minister and, perhaps equally important, the officials in the gallery, that since 1971 when the Unemployment Insurance Act was brought in, reflecting the views of all members of the House, there have been no less than five or six amendments to the bill, if I recall correctly. In each and every one of these amendments there has been a clause or provision, among others, subtly to shift the financial burden of unemployment from the consolidated revenue fund and the government to the employer-employee to the point that it is almost absurd. I would say that close to \$1 billion has been so shifted.

I want to emphasize that again for a second, Mr. Speaker, so that officials know that at least some of us understand what they are doing. I want to say, before I get to the amendments, that it might have been more fair if the officials had told Parliament that they had miscalculated the rate of unemployment in 1970 when they said it would average 4 per cent and that, for reasons beyond their control—the energy crisis is a good example or the unexpected growth of the work force—unemployment should more realistically be predicted at 6 per cent. They could have made the necessary adjustments, and I think Parliament would have understood, the country would have understood, and the opposition would have understood.

Instead, either by coincidence or design, prior to every one of these amendments we had a well-orchestrated campaign based on the alleged abuse of the plan, thus preparing and conditioning people for the amendment and supposedly aimed