

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member will realize that the second part of the question is not in order. The Prime Minister may wish to reply to the first part of the hon. member's question.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the first part was perhaps in order but it was incorrect. The hon. member said there were no such meetings. I do not know what he wishes the House to infer from that, but I have just replied that there have been meetings and will be more.

Mr. Hees: Dealing with other matters but not this.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Chair has recognized the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands. The Chair will return to the hon. member in a moment.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the statement by the Minister of Public Works inside the House that new measures are being prepared to reduce unemployment and his statement outside the House that a number of new public works projects would be included in these new measures, could I ask the Prime Minister whether the minister in question was stating government policy and, if so, when does the Prime Minister intend to have an announcement made to the House regarding the extent and nature of these new measures?

Mr. Trudeau: On the first part of the question, the minister was stating government policy but in reality it was a continuation of government policy. A few days before, I had occasion to enumerate to the House the series of measures which have been taken since the Minister of Finance's last budget in March, and last Friday the Acting Prime Minister was informing the House that the government was in the process of wanting to add to this series. When they will be announced is at the government's discretion. We will announce the measures when they are ready and when they have been discussed fully with the provinces concerned.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the urgency of the matter and the fact that public works projects must be undertaken very soon if they are to have any beneficial effect in reducing winter unemployment, can the Prime Minister indicate when there will be a statement about new public works projects either by the federal government or in conjunction with the provincial governments and municipalities, and will this statement include at the same time a mini-budget outlining some of the government's fiscal proposals with respect to dealing with the problem of unemployment?

Mr. Trudeau: On the first part of the question, I repeat that the timing is up to the government to decide, but it will be as soon as possible.

[Mr. Hees.]

On the second part of the question, may I remind the House that apart from the last budget there was the Minister of Finance's lengthy statement very recently in the debate on the Speech from the Throne in which he put before the House the government's economic and financial position. As to whether there will be another budget needed and at what time, as the House knows this is at the government's discretion and it is something that we will announce in due course. I might say, by the way, that I am very glad that the opposition parties have been conscious of the need to do more and, indeed, have been pressing the government to do more, and we hope that when the time comes to pay for all this we will have their support.

Mr. Speaker: This matter was raised originally by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings and he had a supplementary question which he did not ask. I would like to go back to him now.

Mr. Hees: As it has now become obvious that the government has no new policy to announce, is it not obvious that the Acting Prime Minister was misleading the House on Friday and that the Prime Minister was using double talk and giving us gobbledygook as he usually does when dealing with these matters?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret that I returned to the hon. member. I thought he had a supplementary question.

[Translation]

INCREASE IN PURCHASING POWER TO ALLEVIATE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary to the Prime Minister.

Dealing with unemployment, the Prime Minister himself stated, as proven by a 1954 number of *Cité Libre*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows that the question period only lasts 40 minutes and I do not think that he has to go back to 1954 to ask his question. Therefore, I invite him to ask his question immediately.

Mr. Caouette: Let us remain in 1970 then. The Prime Minister stated: "Happily, there is a remedy that can be applied instantly, at the first sign of weakness in the national economy: it is to stimulate purchases by putting more money into the hands of the consumers."

Is the Prime Minister prepared at this moment to hand over more funds to consumers as a means to fight unemployment efficiently?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had kept himself posted on monetary matters, he would have learned that Bank of Canada credit has been considerably increased in recent months, which means that much more money has been made available to consumers.