

Oral Questions

over time, sulphur dioxide emissions? Or, are we to assume that the Department of the Environment is merely a public relations enterprise and that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources intends to pay no attention to the Department of the Environment and ignore the commitment the Minister of the Environment made to this House on January 29 last?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the entire question should be directed to me. It must be clear to the hon. member that the federal government respects the jurisdiction of Alberta in environmental matters. It will be up to the province to set environmental standards.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**ALLEGED DISCREPANCY BETWEEN MANDATE AND OPERATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. It relates to the recent report of the Economic Council of Canada which criticizes the inadequacy of the government's current programs and past performance. In its report released yesterday, the Economic Council says that much of the problems of abuse of unemployment insurance could be solved by two methods—by tightening administrative efforts to get persons back to work and creating jobs to absorb them. As these recommendations coincide with the very mandate of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, when will the minister rectify the serious discrepancy between the operation and the mandate of the Unemployment Insurance Commission? Will he make a statement in the near future, giving full details?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the premise of the question. The administration of unemployment insurance is efficient and tight.

REASON FOR FAILURE OF CLAIMANTS TO PURSUE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. With respect, the minister may not have read the report. It is a scathing indictment of ministers' programs and the government's attitude to people and jobs. As the report also indicates that 40 per cent of unemployment insurance claimants do not report to manpower centres to pursue job opportunities which present themselves, would the minister care to explain why UIC claimants are reluctant to take advantage of this service and why manpower centres are unable to encourage claimants to attend at the centres? I ask this as there is a problem in this regard.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, many measures, with which the hon. member ought to be familiar by virtue of discussions in the standing committee, have been taken to increase the number of unemployment insurance claimants

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

registering with manpower offices. Indeed, these measures are increasingly successful. I do not agree with the 40 per cent figure the hon. gentleman quoted from the Economic Council's report.

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ANTI-INFLATION BOARD**PROPOSAL TO BRING PROPERTY AND CASUALTY INSURANCE COMPANIES UNDER BOARD—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question was to be directed to the Minister of Finance. In his understandable absence, since it deals with what the philosophy underlying the anti-inflation program can do to companies which operate at a loss, may I direct it to the Prime Minister? Will the right hon. gentleman say what is the government's response to the Anti-Inflation Board's proposal calling for all property and casualty insurance companies to be brought under the mandatory enforcement provisions of the Anti-Inflation Act? I ask this as these highly competitive companies collectively lost \$400 million in the last two years.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will remember that in the policy paper published on October 13 it was indicated that, in cases where entities make a loss, they, of course, would not be bound by the strict application of the guidelines. To the extent that the hon. member asks a precise statistical question, I will take notice of it on behalf of the minister who is attending a federal-provincial conference of finance ministers.

Mr. McCleave: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since, despite what the right hon. gentleman just said, the Anti-Inflation Board recommended that those companies should be brought under those provisions, is there not a serious conflict with the Prime Minister's philosophy?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker. The philosophy I stated is as stated in the white paper. I suggested in the last part of my answer that this may be a particular circumstance of which I know nothing. I will look into the decision and refer it to the Minister of Finance for study.

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[Later]

MANPOWER**RECOMMENDED MERGING OF MANPOWER AND EMPLOYMENT OFFICES—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration is supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Hamilton West. As the Economic Council recommended in its most recent review the putting together or amalgamation of manpower and employment offices, contrary to previous recommendations in which it advocated separation of these offices, will the minister now reverse his decision and integrate these two services under one jurisdiction, so that they may provide worth while service?