

Inquiries of the Ministry

Manpower and Immigration. He may recall that some time before the Christmas recess—I do not remember the exact date—I asked him whether he would consider making a statement to the house shortly on policies designed to deal with increasing unemployment. My memory tells me that at that time he said he would certainly consider doing so, though he did not want my hopes to be raised too high.

May I repeat, now, the question I then asked? In view of the growing unemployment shown by the latest figures, would the minister be prepared to make a statement to the house within the next day or two, as to his policy for dealing with the unemployment situation to which reference has been made?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): The policies which have been administered by the department of manpower, and which will continue to be administered by the department, have been explained extensively in the house. Yesterday, for instance, there was an extended answer to a question on the order paper indicating the large sums presently being spent to combat winter unemployment. At the present time there is nothing further that I have to say about the policies of my department, although as to the general question of unemployment I shall continue to give it consideration and discuss it with my colleagues.

Mr. Lewis: A further supplementary question, this time to the minister responsible for rural development. On several occasions the hon. gentleman has been asked about his policies for dealing with regional disparity, particularly in the employment field, and he has told us that when the bill setting up his new department comes before the house, those policies will be discussed. May I therefore ask the hon. gentleman to inform the house when the bill setting up his and other departments will be before parliament, so that we may discuss the whole question of unemployment and regional disparity in Canada?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I am probably one of the members of this house who is most anxious to have this bill brought in as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister a supplementary question.

[Mr. Lewis.]

In his previous answer to the Leader of the Opposition, the Acting Prime Minister seemed to consider the adult retraining program as greatly important to prepare those people to hold a position, to get employment in Canada, and I would like to ask him if he is aware of economic regions or Canadian industries short of qualified labour at the present time.

[*English*]

Mr. Hellyer: I think the answer to that, Mr. Speaker, would be, yes. Not more than a few weeks ago, travelling across this country, I visited a number of places where there were jobs available and no men available to take them.

An hon. Member: Name them.

Mr. Hellyer: Thompson, Manitoba, is one of them. There are others, too. I should like to tell the hon. member that the action of the government late in the year in making mortgage loans available through its agent, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, has resulted in tens of thousands of additional jobs for Canadian workers this winter, in addition to tens of thousands of jobs indirectly as a result of house building activity which, during the year just ended, was at the highest level in the history of Canada, even beyond the forecast requirement of the Economic Council.

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Central Nova): A question to the minister of trade and industry. I wonder whether the minister, bearing in mind the questions which were asked before the recess, would do his best to accelerate the sittings of the special cabinet committee, which I understand he heads, so as to bring forth policies to deal with the heavy unemployment in shipyards across Canada.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I have written recently to the shipyards association calling attention to the advantages which they have, and have had in the past, and asking them to bring forward projects, plans and ideas for their own reorganization, perhaps with help from the government. They are preparing for a meeting now.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): My question is directed to the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development. In the light of the worsening unemployment situation in the Atlantic region and the minister's remarks last fall on a couple of occasions about