

Oral Questions

Mr. Lawrence: My question is simply this, and it goes back to the first question asked today: will the minister please reconsider his adamant stand not to introduce a budget, in view of the soaring inflation and unemployment rate in Canada today? It is as simple as that.

● (1450)

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASE—UTILIZATION OF
SPECIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM BY QUEBEC
MUNICIPALITIES—PROVINCIAL CO-OPERATION

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance who announced several months ago a special investment program for municipalities to assist in development and creation of new jobs.

Can he say whether he received many applications from the province of Quebec in view of the fact that it is one of the hardest hit provinces in Canada as far as unemployment is concerned? If so, did that province co-operate with the federal government in the allotment of those investment funds?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of co-operation and co-ordination between the province of Quebec and the federal government.

As far as specific figures go, Mr. Speaker, I would like to get them and send them to the hon. member.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASE—ACCEPTANCE OF
CERTAIN LEVEL BY GOVERNMENT IN
LIGHT OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance.

I would like to know if he will continue to go along with the Governor of the Bank of Canada that economic expansion is largely responsible for unemployment, inflation, and that a certain level of unemployment is acceptable to the government. I want to know if a rate of 6 per cent at the national level and 8 per cent in the province of Quebec is acceptable to the government at this moment.

[*English*]

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, neither the rate of price increases nor the rate of unemployment is satisfactory to the government.

Mr. Lawrence: Then what are you doing about it?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Central Nova.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grafftey: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps we might allow the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi to ask a supplementary question, after which I will recognize the hon. member for Central Nova and then the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

[Mr. Speaker.]

[*Translation*]

CONSULTATION WITH QUEBEC ON WINTER WORKS
PROJECTS TO RELIEVE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Finance.

In view of the seriousness of the present situation, will the hon. Minister of Finance contact without delay the government of the province of Quebec to prepare definite projects to improve the situation in that province during the winter months, because of the 8 per cent unemployment rate existing in Quebec at the present time?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am in contact fairly regularly with my provincial counterpart and other ministers of the provincial government. Should any acute problems arise, there would doubtless be immediate contacts.

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[*English*]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

POLICY OF GOVERNMENT RESPECTING TAILORING OF
FINANCE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES TO ASSIST
DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister in the absence of the minister responsible for DREE. In view of the steady rise of what one might call the discomfort index in the poorer regions of Canada, will the Acting Prime Minister indicate whether it is government policy now at last to tailor policies on finance and transportation, for example, to assist rather than to act in a counter-productive fashion in regional development?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not been aware of any inconsistency in the policies of the government on this score. They are all directed to improving conditions in all parts of the country, particularly, of course, where growth has not been as rapid as it has been in the centre of the country.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. In view of his earlier answer which indicated that in his opinion unemployment is concentrated mainly among the unemployed, is he now prepared to indicate that he will voluntarily make some adaptations in his policy to complement the policies of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will want to read that question very carefully in *Hansard*. I want to tell the hon. member, however, of the very close co-operation and co-ordination between myself and my colleague.