

employment. Unemployment has not increased among women. Last month, the number of employed women increased, while in other groups, employment dropped.

Furthermore, the Hon. Member will also recall that since the recession bottomed out, women were the group that experienced the fastest growth in employment and rose beyond the level where they were during the recession. The latest figures I read indicated that women have recovered about 120 per cent of the jobs they had lost in the recession. Thus, the Government's economic policy has been more effective for women than for any other groups in our society, since employment among women rose more substantially than in any other group in recent months.

[English]

ALLOCATION OF FOOD PROVIDED BY VANCOUVER FOOD BANK

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose some questions to the Minister of Finance regarding these devastating and continuing unemployment figures. I would like to try to bring it down to some level of reality and humanity. I have passed to the Minister a list I received from one of my constituents in Vancouver, who went to the food bank. He is an unemployed construction worker, head of a family, and it is a list of food to support a family of five for one week. I want to ask the Minister what I should tell this particular person.

• (1130)

Could the Minister live on the following short list: two loaves of bread, eight muffins, six carrots, two onions, one box of Kraft dinner, one can of tuna, one of chicken noodle soup, one can of pork and beans, one small jar of peanut butter, two packages of Japanese noodle soup, one can of pears, one can of creamed corn, and one package of instant potatoes? Will the Minister tell me what I am supposed to say to my constituent about his job prospects? Also, could the Minister live on this diet for one week?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend should tell his constituent that this is the result of the policy of the Social Credit Government of that province, which is very close of the policy of the Conservatives in this House. As the Hon. Member knows, the provision of support for people under the Canada Assistance Plan, and for people on welfare, is determined by the provincial Governments in this country, under our Constitution. We pay 50 per cent of whatever level of support is provided by the provincial Governments in that regard. This is their responsibility. Under the Constitution, we do not have a direct responsibility in this regard. We are paying 50 per cent of that support.

If my friend can convince the provincial Government of British Columbia to improve significantly both its welfare payments and the type of program that is mentioned here, the federal Government will pay 50 per cent of whatever is provided. Unfortunately, the federal Government does not have authority in that regard, as the Hon. Member knows.

*Oral Questions*

BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Minister that that is a pathetic answer. People are looking for jobs, not welfare. They do not care which Government has jurisdiction.

This is the Minister of Finance for Canada. He has told this House on past occasions that things are getting better. In answer to a question from the Conservatives today he said there was a consolidation of the recovery. Who is getting the benefit of this recovery? Where is the recovery going? When he told the House two months ago that things were improving, was he just stupid, or was he lying?

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Crosbie:** I vote for stupidity.

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, my friend is certainly getting carried away with his own rhetoric. I will not fly at his low level. I repeat to him that my first concern is to create as many jobs as we can for the people of Canada. As I indicated, we have to ensure that we are competitive, that we have a strong base whereby we can be efficient, productive, and competitive in a very tough world market. That has been the objective of this Government's policy in my last two Budgets, to build the base upon which this country will be able to provide Canadians with full-time, well-paying jobs, and the stability of employment that we wish for them. My friend has to realize that this takes time and that we cannot expect to cut employment very rapidly in this country if we want to be serious about it.

We have been improving significantly in terms of inflation and increasing productivity. The Canadian economy is growing as strongly as practically any other industrial country at the present time. As I said, I expect this will show up in reduced unemployment during the course of this year.

PRODUCTIVITY INCREASE—EFFECT ON EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I must say to the Minister that my constituent cannot go to Paris. He has to live on the food bank in Vancouver.

The Minister said that productivity is increasing. Twice he has said in the House today that productivity is increasing, and that he is expecting a reduction in unemployment. I ask the Minister, on behalf of the unemployed construction worker in my constituency, when is that going to happen, when will this man be able to get a job? If productivity is increasing so much, why is it not being translated in terms of jobs, instead of peanut butter and half a dozen carrots for people at food banks?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I will explain to my friend the meaning of productivity. Increased productivity means that, for a lower cost in this country, we will be able to produce the same goods. Even better, we will produce more goods cheaper than before. We