

Inquiries of the Ministry

An hon. Member: That's a change.

Mr. Trudeau: I just submit that, before being able to answer the question of the Leader of the Opposition, we will have to look at them in a little greater depth. We only received them this morning and it is obvious from some questions which have been asked that various interpretations are possible. We know, for instance, that these figures reveal that there has been the biggest surge in the numbers of unemployed ever during the spring and summer—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau:—in the numbers of employed; I beg your pardon. There has been the biggest surge in job creation ever in the spring and summer months, and this has translated itself into a lowering of the unemployment figures for people 25 years old and over. Therefore the addition in the figures is caused essentially, I would say, only by the people in the 14 to 24 age group. This is obviously very serious, but the cause of it is not too well known. What we do know is that the rate of participation has increased; in other words, the number of people who at this time of year usually withdraw from the labour force have not withdrawn in that age group. We want to see the causes and reasons for that before being able to prescribe remedies.

Mr. Stanfield: In view of the fact that these figures which the Prime Minister cited just now support the position that the June budget presented by the government was based upon false premises, will the Prime Minister now commit the government to bring in some realistic tax cuts, with a view to giving our economy a real forward surge which has not developed as a result of the budget?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I do not subscribe to the "realisticness" or otherwise of the premise concerning the budget. I just point out to the opposition and to the country that there is nothing easier or more enjoyable for a government than to cut taxes, especially in a year leading up to when there might be an election. It is not a matter of urging from the opposition to cut taxes. We would love to do that if it were the best thing to do but, as I said in my previous answer, we are trying to look for the most responsible answer for this serious economic situation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I suggest that this is really a question of the complacency and indifference of the government. Since even the Minister of Manpower and Immigration has indicated that the purported downturn forecast by the government just is not fast enough, will the Prime Minister reveal to the House what the government's own projections are with regard to employment for the balance of the year? In particular, will the Prime Minister indicate whether he now expects the seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment will fall below 6 per cent as he and the Minister of Finance have been predicting all year?

• (2:30 p.m.)

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I have never made any prophecy on this. I think the Minister of Finance was

[Mr. Trudeau.]

indicating what he expected the figures to be from the general projections he could assemble. I certainly support the Minister of Finance.

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—REQUEST FOR NEW
BUDGET WITH NEW ECONOMIC DIRECTION

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In view of the disturbing rate of unemployment and in view of the fact that all of the economic indicators are in the negative, will the government now consider bringing in a brand new budget setting out a new economic direction for this country?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the Prime Minister is not willing to answer that question, does that mean that the government is satisfied with the growing rate of unemployment?

UNEMPLOYMENT IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES—SUGGESTED
TALKS WITH GOVERNMENTS ON JOINT STIMULATIVE
MEASURES

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In light of the fact that unemployment in the Atlantic provinces is chronic, for example, the seasonally adjusted unemployment figures for Prince Edward Island have been around 2,000 for over a year, will the government give consideration to holding talks with the governments of the Atlantic provinces with a view to embarking jointly on stimulative measures to reduce unemployment in the Atlantic provinces?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we do not see any reason for having talks with any particular province at this time of the year. The figures with which we are concerned apply to the total labour force and particularly, as I said, those in the age group from 14 to 24. We have regional programs. We have had regional meetings with regional groups of provinces, but I do not think there would be any justification at this time for meeting merely with the Atlantic provinces and not with any other province that wanted to discuss this subject.

Mr. MacLean: A supplementary question. Will the Prime Minister consider—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I notice that many hon. members are rising on supplementaries. They will be recognized in due course, but I doubt whether all of them can be given an opportunity to ask supplementaries in the 40 minutes we have available. However, I will do my best to keep the matter rolling as smoothly as possible. For the moment I recognize the hon. member for Malpeque.

Mr. MacLean: Will the Prime Minister give consideration to meeting jointly with all the provincial governments with a view to reducing the unemployment figures inasmuch as all levels of government have a keen interest in this matter?