

SPECIAL MEASURES TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT AS  
RECOMMENDED BY ECONOMIC COUNCIL—PROPOSED  
MEETING WITH PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he has received a copy of the most recent report of the Economic Council of Canada which, according to press reports, urges special measures to reduce the very high rate of unemployment now and the high rate of unemployment to be expected this winter. Is consideration being given by the government to such special measures?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is probably referring to the annual report which, under the law, was tabled in the House a couple of days ago and I believe is dated early in July. Therefore his information is a little bit out of date.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, that is not what I am referring to. I will not argue with the Prime Minister, but I should like to ask him specifically, without reference to the report, whether the government is calling a conference of the provinces and municipalities not in December or January but immediately in order to arrive at some work for this winter that will create possibly tens of thousands of jobs across Canada?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the member may have been away from the House, but a couple of days ago I explained I was trying to have a meeting with the provinces and that already four dates had been proposed by me in October and November. There is still some difficulty in obtaining agreement on any of those dates. As soon as I have a firm report from the provinces as to what date they can attend I will convene such a meeting, but I will not, as the member suggests, demand that the provinces come down here right away.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I was in the House when that question was asked and answered, and I noted that the Prime Minister said he was seeking a meeting on non-constitutional matters. I am also aware of the letters that have gone to him and the letters he has sent. I want to ask him whether he has asked the provinces, and through them the municipalities, to come to Ottawa to discuss some work program for this winter to deal with unemployment or has he asked the provinces to come and deal with general matters without specific reference to the problem of unemployment?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I explained that to the House too. Some time in the summer I wrote to the provinces to try to obtain from them consent to a day early in the fall. As is the usual practice, we do not begin to discuss the agenda until we have at least some tentative agreement on a date, but I did indicate publicly in this very place that it was the government's intention to have the item of the economy very high up on the agenda. I think the House would realize that even if it had not been our intention it probably would have been put there at the request of the provinces. Under the circumstances I do not see what more the Leader of the New Democratic Party wants.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, do I understand from the Prime Minister's answer that in fact he has not taken the

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

initiative to call a special conference for the purpose of discussing works this winter to deal with unemployment?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the New Democratic Party can, as usual, draw the conclusion he wants from any premise. The facts are as I stated, that I am trying to arrange a meeting with me of the first ministers of the provinces on subjects to be discussed. I indicated that one of the subjects should be the very one that concerns the member, but I cannot follow his logic when he deduces from that that I would get more results if I told them to come down here now because we want to discuss this particular agenda.

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the intention of the government when it meets with the provincial representatives to put forward a specific plan or suggest "special measures to combat very high unemployment and high prices and costs" as recommended by the Economic Council of Canada in its report which it has made recently to the government and which has been in the government's hands for quite some time? Is that the intention of the government?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, as with the question of the Leader of the New Democratic Party, it is obscure to me whether the report is the annual report, as I think it was, or some other report as the Leader of the New Democratic Party said it was without indicating what other report he was thinking of, if he was thinking at all.

• (2:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt whatsoever that the report that I am referring to is the report that was recently handed to the Prime Minister and the government. I am asking him if he intends to take specific action or not.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Témiscamingue.

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Prime Minister a further supplementary in a non-argumentative and polite way. I asked him if he intends to do certain things for the good of the people of this country. As I see it, there is no reason why the Prime Minister should not answer. I am simply asking, does he intend to continue to ignore the recommendations made to the government by the Economic Council of Canada as this government has continually done in the past? Answer that one. On your feet and answer that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that a question asked in those terms is not in order.

**Mr. Hees:** What a chance this country has with a government like that!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.