

*Oral Questions*UNEMPLOYMENT—MEASURES TO COUNTERACT EFFECT IN
EASTERN PROVINCES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration? Since the conference board in its quarterly provincial forecast, released last week, predicted an unemployment rate in the five eastern provinces in excess of 10 per cent, the rates in two of those provinces, Newfoundland and Quebec, being both considerably higher; and since the already announced works programs of the minister, the Canada Works program and the Young Canada Works program, are merely a new form of the existing LIP program which diminishes that program's effectiveness by stretching it over one year, may I ask the minister what new initiatives the government is prepared to take in the light of this serious situation, in which the actual rate of unemployment in one province, for example, is 35 per cent?

Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member is showing the typical knee-jerk reaction which the Conservative party shows to anything new being introduced.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cullen: We have placed heavy emphasis, particularly in the hon. member's province, on moneys spent on the LIP, Canada Works and the Young Canada Works programs, in recognition of the high unemployment factor there. We have institutional and industrial training, and in 1976-77 these programs will amount to \$15.4 million and deal with 6,600 workers. Given that, plus the LIP allocation for 1976-77 of \$17.8 million, I think it can be said that the government is doing its share, doing its part, and to denigrate from those efforts really does not say much for the party which has no policy whatsoever.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister a supplementary question? Since some of those provinces already have an unemployment level of more than 15 per cent, the rate in my own province being 35 per cent, and since the Canada Works Program depends on the initiative of others, may I ask the minister what initiatives he and his colleagues are prepared to take, to make jobs in this country? For starters, I ask the minister to look kindly upon the suggestion that he meet with the heads of government of those five provinces, to come up with new programs immediately.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, unhappily for the hon. member programs are not financed with baloney, or he would have all he needs; they are financed with money. We have spent \$1.3 billion annually on job creation and training programs, and the hon. member sees fit to denigrate what I think is a good effort. Maybe we can find more money; certainly, these programs are excellent, stretching over the whole broad spectrum of need in this country and there is much emphasis placed on areas like the hon. member's province.

[Mr. Stevens.]

UNEMPLOYMENT—ALLEGATION STATISTICS UNDERESTIMATE
LEVEL—REQUEST FOR PROGRAMS TO ASSIST ATLANTIC
PROVINCES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration who, being an expert in the subject, recognizes baloney when he hears it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: I ask the minister, with specific reference to the programs he referred to in terms of job creation, if he will acknowledge before the House that the allocation of funds for those programs depends upon official unemployment insurance statistics? If this is so, will he also acknowledge that statistics for Newfoundland, for example, and Cape Breton Island underestimate by 100 per cent the real level of unemployment and that therefore the amounts of money going into those areas are in inverse proportion to the need? If the minister agrees with that, will he tell us what special programs he is going to come up with to correct this, which increases the existing inequalities in the country?

● (1420)

Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, here again we recognize that we have what is called an imperfect science, but we are endeavouring to determine the exact statistics for which the hon. member is looking. However, we apply them equally across the country. It would be inappropriate to use one set of principles and guidelines in the area suggested by the leader of the NDP and different programs elsewhere. We are endeavouring to come up with better, more perfect and more appropriate statistics, but in the interim, given the funds available, those we have are probably appropriate.

Mr. Broadbent: I go back to the minister's choice of the term "baloney". His baloney answer took a long time to inform us he is not going to change the maldistribution of funds which now exists. I wish to ask a supplementary. Given the fact that Premier Moores of the province of Newfoundland stated publicly recently that for that province to maintain its already worst record in terms of unemployment levels in Canada, it has to create an additional 5,000 new jobs a year on top of the recent annual rate which was already an increase of 5,000, is the minister prepared to announce that the government will take a particular approach to Atlantic Canada and bring forward a significant job creation program, not some time distant such as the end of the summer, but within the next few weeks?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, here again the hon. member ignores the fact that some \$17 million is put into that particular province, given its high levels of unemployment. The hon. member is wrong to say we are not changing our criteria because we are under the Canada Works Program. I am looking for a different method of determining unemployment