

## Oral Questions

## TRADE

NEW INITIATIVES TO ASSIST EXPORTERS IN VIEW OF 1972  
DECLINE IN MERCHANDISE TRADE SURPLUS

**Hon. Paul Hellyer (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the alarming turnabout in Canada's international balance of payments for 1972, resulting in a deficit of \$584 million and resulting almost entirely from a decline of more than \$900 million in Canada's merchandise trade surplus, does the minister contemplate any new initiatives to assist Canadian exporters?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I reported on this particular set of relationships on an earlier occasion. I do regard the turndown as serious, as I think all members do, but by no means catastrophic. I think this is to some extent establishing a balance we have seen before. As to the particular measures the government has taken, all I can say and underline is that we believe measures to put the manufacturing industry in Canada on a fully competitive basis with the manufacturing industries of other countries to be of very considerable importance.

• (1440)

**Mr. Baldwin:** You have been damned slow about it.

**Mr. Hellyer:** In view of the fact that the shipping rate for Japanese auto parts destined for Canada is only \$48.75 per ton weight or measurement, plus a \$1.00 surcharge, while Canadian exporters of auto parts to Japan must pay the much higher rate of \$63 per ton plus a 4½ per cent currency adjustment, what steps does the minister propose to take to ensure that Canadian exporters will be subject to the same favourable rate as the Japanese now enjoy?

**Mr. Gillespie:** I am sure the hon. member understands that questions relating to international freight rates and shipping conferences are matters for multilateral negotiations; they cannot be changed overnight. However, they are under study. It is perhaps worth noting with respect to our trade surplus—and the hon. member did recognize we are in a trade surplus position—that in the first two months of this year our trade surplus has increased, not diminished.

\* \* \*

## INCOME TAX

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT  
HIGHER DEDUCTIONS FOR THOSE OVER 65, THE BLIND,  
DISABLED AND STUDENTS

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister now that we are once again in the season for filing income tax returns. I should like to ask whether there is any reason the legislation has not been introduced to implement the higher personal income tax deductions indicated for those over the age of 65, for the blind, the disabled, and for students, which were supposed to be effective as of January 1, 1972?

[Mr. Basford.]

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** The reasons up to now are based on the conduct of parliamentary affairs and the necessity of obtaining supply and debating the various other topics that have accounted for our time. We are now only waiting for the return of the Minister of Finance and we expect to introduce those bills this week.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he has any advice to give Canadians in the categories I have mentioned who are now filing tax returns on whether they should file tax returns as yet unauthorized by law or should wait? What advice would he give to those who feel they are entitled to rebates but who cannot receive them because of the delay in the passage of this law?

**Mr. Trudeau:** The government has always taken the position that it would bring these bills forward, as to the particular matters mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, my advice is that taxpayers can go ahead with some assurance because I cannot see the opposition voting against this kind of rebate to deserving taxpayers.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

## PUBLIC WORKS

EXPENDITURES MADE AT HEADQUARTERS LEVEL  
DURING MONTH OF MARCH

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Public Works. Since that department engages in a fair amount of expenditure of public funds and inasmuch as we are just a few days away from the end of the present fiscal year, can the minister assure the House that his department is not intensifying expenditures these last few days at the headquarters level merely because there are funds which have not yet been expended during the present fiscal year?

**Hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Minister of Public Works):** No, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case at all.

**Mr. Howard:** Would the minister be prepared to table for the month of March the avenues of expenditure by the headquarters office of his department, the contracts that have been entered into and the manner in which that money has been expended during the month of March?

**Mr. Dubé:** I have no personal objection at all, Mr. Speaker. I will inquire whether this can be done.

**Mr. Howard:** May I address a further supplementary, this time to the President of the Treasury Board? Will the President of the Treasury Board make a similar commitment to compile information for all the other departments in relation to their headquarters expenditures this month?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** I will be glad to consider the size of this task, Mr. Speaker.