

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the Hon. Member is that he has a very selective memory.

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**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE****CALCULATION OF PENSION AS INCOME**

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Why is a retiree in receipt of a pension and working and contributing to unemployment insurance treated differently from a retiree who also works and contributes to unemployment insurance but receives additional income from a retirement savings plan or from investments?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I realize the Hon. Member is raising the question of changes in regulations regarding unemployment insurance and how they impact on pensions and severance pay. As he knows, new regulations came into effect the first of the year. The whole question has been referred to the Forget Commission for examination in all aspects and we are waiting for its report.

**REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT OF BENEFITS**

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister take the initiative afforded her by a recent ruling of an Unemployment Insurance Commission board and reinstate benefits, at least for those who have been deprived of benefits they otherwise would have received by virtue of retiring prior to January 5, without having to go back through the appeal process?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, there have been many of these cases which have gone to appeal. Some boards have rejected the regulations and other boards have approved them. So there is divided opinion. The next step will be to have these adjudicated by an umpire. As this is a quasi-judicial process and I do not think at this point I should interfere.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS****USE OF ALBERTA COAL TO PREVENT ACID RAIN**

**Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Hon. Minister of the Environment. Does the Canadian Government, along with the Ontario Government, have any plans to provide for the use of Alberta sulphur-free coals to prevent acid rain, instead of utilizing American coals containing ten times as much sulphur, and then spending millions of dollars to clean up the mess, much of which would

never have occurred if Alberta sulphur-free coals had been used in the first place?

**Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the coal is not sulphur-free but the Hon. Member is right that it is much lower in sulphur than the American alternative we are importing. I have always found that situation at best anomalous and, at worst, bizarre. My predecessor shared my view to the extent of setting up a task force of experts from across the country, with participation by the western provinces, except Manitoba, and Ontario to boot. The task force will report on June 1, 1986. I await its report with eagerness and with a very favourable disposition to the point of view that the Hon. Member has expressed.

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**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS****GENSTAR—ATTEMPTED TAKEOVER BY IMASCO**

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Finance. He should be aware that last November's report from the Finance Committee expressed concern about concentration of ownership in the financial services industry and the implications of financial institutions being owned by non-financial interests. In light of the bid from the fast food and tobacco giant Imasco to take over Genstar Financial Corporation, which owns Canada's largest trust company and has 70 per cent of its holdings in the financial sector, will he tell the House what action the Government proposes to take before Imasco's takeover bid closes on April 25?

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take that question as notice and refer it to my hon. colleague, the Minister of Finance, who will be happy to answer it as soon as he returns.

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**AGRICULTURE****POSSIBLE EFFECT OF PROPOSED UNITED STATES FARM BILL**

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said on Friday in this House that the Government's assistance to Canadian farmers would be an extremely high priority in light of the negative impact of the U.S. farm Bills. Can the Minister of Agriculture tell the House what specific assistance programs are being considered to alleviate the effect of these Bills particularly on grain producers?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will recognize that Question Period is a very difficult time in which to respond with an answer in great detail. It might be of some help to him to know that my colleague, the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, will be making two announcements in the very near future.