

Oral Questions

Ms. Black: Mr. Speaker, I shudder to think if the minister really believes that increasing a tax will not decrease women's spending dollars.

Low income families spend over 90 per cent of their income on basic consumption, while families earning over \$50,000 spend only 56 per cent. Tax credits, to the contrary, will not cover the cost of this GST to low income families or to women who are low income earners.

Why is the minister forcing low income Canadians and women to bear the burden of his GST?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, let me point out in the first place that it is not in the interests of women that the deficit go up, that interest rates go up, and that the economy goes down. That is not in women's interests.

Over half of the new jobs that have been created since 1984 have women working in them. Their skills are better than they were before and they have better jobs. The sales tax credit is going to benefit women more than any other group. The single parent credit means that the woman gets a credit of \$275 and she gets a credit of \$275 for her oldest child. We have taken these things into account. If the hon. member insists on telling people this, she is going to raise the alarm level well beyond what it belongs to.

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HUNGARY AND POLAND

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

In view of the fact that both Hungary and Poland took great risks in implementing more democratic forms of government, and considering the fact that both countries will require immediate and long-term assistance in achieving their economic and political reforms, will the Secretary of State tell Canadians today in this House what assistance Canada is offering to these two countries to help them achieve their economic, social and political goals?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I know all members of the House want to give the utmost of encouragement to the forces of reform and change in both Poland and Hungary.

I am not in a position to reveal the details of the package to the House at this moment because it is still under consideration by the cabinet in meetings that we will be holding this week, but I look forward to being able to make that announcement sometime next week.

I had the occasion last week at the United Nations to meet directly with the foreign ministers of both Poland and Hungary to discuss with them the range of their needs and ways in which Canadians, including private Canadians, including people outside government, can be of help to them in their reform. As the member knows, Lech Walesa will be in Canada as a guest of the Canadian Labour Congress in November. The Prime Minister and others of us will be meeting with him and with other representatives of Solidarity.

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EAST GERMAN MIGRATION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Everyone has been watching with fascination and interest the mass exodus of some 25,000 East Germans to the west in the past days.

Given that this migration is the largest movement in eastern Europe in 30 years, and given that Canada has responded to the historical developments in eastern Europe, whether accepting 9,000 Poles in 1982; 12,000 Czechoslovakians in 1968 or 37,000 Hungarians in 1956, what action is the minister and her government taking in response to requests made by Canadian organizations that they initiate a program to facilitate the entry of some of those East Germans fleeing their country into the west.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I have met with representatives of the East German community in Canada and have suggested to them that this government is prepared to work with them in signing a master agreement as a priority action for private sponsorships in Canada, which does, of course, involve the government in some cost as well. We are going to do everything we can in working not just with the East German community in Canada but in terms of the kinds of provisions that we can make. We recognize the sensitivity of this situation. We have tried to respond to other eastern European interests in the past two or three years and we will continue to do so.