I would like also to say a word about the mining industry. The First Minister's conference directed Finance and Resource Ministers to undertake an early review of the taxation of the mineral industry. The government is proceeding with its review and looks forward to further consultation with the provinces in the near future.

Retirement Income

Almost two million Canadians have Registered Retirement Savings Plans, enabling them to set aside funds to provide income after retirement. The wide range of choice allowed in setting up these plans and the generous tax treatment for contributions have made them very popular.

I have some concern, however, over the limited choice available to RRSP holders when the time comes to turn their savings into retirement income. A taxpayer is now required to invest his RRSP proceeds in a life annuity with an insurance company prior to his 71st birthday. The only alternative he has is to withdraw the funds in a lump sum and pay income tax on this amount in the same year.

I propose to introduce two additional alternatives that will increase flexibility while retaining the basic principle that RRSP funds are intended to be used for retirement income.

The first alternative will allow the purchase of a fixed-term annuity to provide benefits to age 90.

The second alternative will allow the taxpayer to have his RRSP savings placed in a new kind of investment vehicle to be known as a Registered Retirement Income Fund. Each year a set fraction of the total assets in the Fund—capital plus accumulated investment earnings—will be withdrawn and taken into income. This fraction will be determined by a formula designed to provide benefits to age 90. Payments would grow over time at a rate reflecting the investment performance of the Fund and thus provide a degree of protection against future inflation. There will be provisions enabling a taxpayer to manage his investments in much the same way as he can now with a self-administered RRSP.

Institutions with the right to issue RRSPs will be permitted to sell fixed term annuities or retirement income funds. At present this includes mainly life insurance and trust companies.

● (2032)

The transfer of an RRSP into any of the retirement income options must occur between age 60 and age 71.

I am confident that the added alternatives will provide the range of choice that taxpayers desire in planning for retirement. They respond to concerns expressed to me by many Canadians.

Family Law Reform

A number of provinces have introduced fundamental changes in the laws relating to the division of certain properties between marriage partners. These changes in law raise a number of important issues which are far from being resolved. Because they affect several provisions of the Income Tax Act, I am monitoring the developments in this area very closely. In the meantime, I am proposing a change in the provisions so that transfers of property between spouses pursuant to provincial family laws will not give rise to taxable capital gains.

The Ways and Means Motion contains several other important changes. First, the current provisions which permit the transfer of farm land and buildings by a farmer to his children without payment of capital gains tax will be extended to incorporated family farms. Second, single employees will now receive the same tax exemption as married employees on the value of free board and lodging provided at logging camps and other remote work locations. Third, I am proposing certain tax changes to further promote the production of good Canadian films.

Problems of the Past Year

The structural changes in the economy which these measures will encourage will help us achieve the growth we need over the next four or five years. I have also had to consider what measures would be helpful in dealing with the immediate problems which confront us.

[*Translation*]

Although the prices of the things we produce continued to slow down last year, the prices of the things we consume have risen more sharply. There were two major factors—higher prices of imported foods and the decline in the exchange rate. I do not believe the price surge will last. I believe the direct impact of our dollar's decline is now largely behind us. Further, an improving supply situation should help to slow the rise in food prices.

The growth of output was disappointing last year. The rate dropped from about 5 per cent in 1976 to 2.6 per cent in 1977, according to the preliminary estimate. The most unfortunate consequence was the rise in unemployment. Unemployment has reached unacceptable levels despite a substantial increase in the number of Canadians who are working. Employment has increased more than 3 per cent in the past year. Almost 300,000 more Canadians are working today than one year ago. But our labour force has also been growing rapidly, much more rapidly than in other countries. Since 1970, our labour force has increased by about 3½ per cent a year, compared with 2 per cent in the United States and well under 1 per cent in the United Kingdom, France and Japan. In Germany, the labour force has actually dropped over this period.

An important reason for the growth of our labour force has been the growing number of Canadian women who are working. Since 1970 the number of adult women in the labour force has increased from 1.9 million to 2.7 million, a rise of more than 40 per cent. There has also been a surge of young people coming into the labour market. This surge will not last; in many schools, there are now empty desks. But the immediate challenge is to create enough jobs for all our young people. Youth unemployment is one of our most serious problems. It cannot be dealt with only by general economic policies. Our