

*Oral Questions*

I have a question for the Minister of National Health. If he really believes in the health of our children, why would he and his government implement this unfair policy over the next two years under which they are taking \$865 million off the funds earmarked for poorer families only in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia? Why is he taking this kind of action against the children of Canada?

• (1420 )

[English]

**Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is the acting leader of her party. As such, one would expect that she would at least have some understanding of the subject that she raises.

She should be aware of the fact when she cites the province of Quebec that the restriction on the Canada Assistance Plan does not apply in the case of Quebec. It is totally unrestricted.

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**REVENUE CANADA**

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. This question is about another of this government's inane economic policies.

Yesterday, in British Columbia, the Minister of National Revenue announced a program that actually encourages Canadians to shop in the United States. It amounts to a life in the fast lane program for a select group of shoppers who can pay an up-front fee and who have credit cards.

Why is the government putting into effect a new policy that will help the economies of Michigan, of Washington and of New York and has no new policies to help the economy of Canada, to help the economy of our own country?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has as usual only partially read the announcement of the Minister of National Revenue.

When the Minister of National Revenue announced this pilot yesterday, the Pace Program, he mentioned that in the fast lane there would be random checks, there

would be heavy fines, and there would be important sanctions against those who abuse the fast lane.

Therefore what the fast lane will do is make sure that Canadians now pay fully all their duties and taxes, something that did not happen under the previous government. Second, it will speed the flow of U.S. tourists into Canada. Third and most important, it will maybe encourage Canadians to shop in Canada.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, this program at this stage applies only to Canadians. Instead of being checked each time they cross the border, they will just throw a little card in a box. That does not sound too strict to me.

Statistics Canada has reported that the number of same day car trips to the United States in January jumped 15.2 per cent above the same month last year. Retail analyst, John Winter, speaking of this increase, said it was directly due to the GST. He went on to say:

This is bleak economic news for municipalities on the Canadian side of the border. But it is bonanza days for merchants on the other side.

Why does the government want to create an economic bonanza for merchants on the American side of the border rather than for those on the Canadian side? Has its policies not done enough damage already to merchants in our border communities?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would be the first person to stand up if we stopped every car for a half hour each and rifled through them. He would be the first one to complain.

The member also knows that the Retail Council of Canada asked us to come up with a scheme whereby we would start to collect fully all duties and taxes. This scheme allows that.

We have also been asked by thousands and thousands of tourist operators to make sure that the three-hour wait at this particular border crossing where we are doing the pilot is so long that American tourists are deciding not to come to Canada.

We are coming up with a scheme in which we can increase the flow and speed the flow as well as make sure that Canadians who return pay their fully duties and taxes.