

take action, or does he really want to return to the situation of 1981, where the banks made their highest profits in decades? Will he show some genuine concern, in short, about inflation, and attack it where it is occurring, instead of making scapegoats of workers?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member says that the profits were record high in 1981. I told him that the matter was studied by this House in 1981.

**Mr. Broadbent:** It was the Conservatives.

**Mr. Lalonde:** They were not found to be excessive. They were found to be appropriate profits. Far from making scapegoats of the workers, on the contrary our policy has all been aimed at trying to improve the lot of workers in this country.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Lalonde:** As I said, for the first time in five years workers will see their standard of living improved in 1983, thanks to the policies we have followed in fighting inflation, without the support of the NDP, mind you. Therefore, as far as the general situation involving profits and interest rates is concerned, I believe that the solution is through competition. If the banks are overcharging, there are other financial institutions in the market, beginning with credit unions and caisses populaires, which are also in the business of lending money, and there is a great deal of competition. What we should do is to encourage competition between institutions. This is the line I have been following, and the one I intend to follow.

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## TRADE

### EXPORTS TO PACIFIC RIM COUNTRIES

**Mr. D. M. Collette (York East):** Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of State for International Trade. The *Financial Post* has just reported that Canada's prospects for international trade look extremely good in the 1980s, particularly with Pacific Rim countries. In view of the fact that Canada's trade in goods posted a surplus of \$6 billion in the first four months of 1983, could the Minister inform the House whether the initiatives taken earlier this year by the Prime Minister himself, in southeast Asia, have contributed to this admirable record?

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)):** Madam Speaker, in response to the Hon. Member I want to say that the southeast Asian market is our most rapidly expanding market and is of intense importance. I guess that if the rules of the House were to allow, I could read off, for the Hon. Member, an endless number of contracts which have been signed or are under their last stages of negotiation since the Prime Minister's visit to southeast Asia. Perhaps I

## Oral Questions

would merely point out that exports from Canada to Asia over the past year increased at a time when Asia's over-all imports were going down, from \$7.8 billion, to \$8.3 billion.

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

**Mr. Regan:** I would further suggest that any Hon. Member who wants to know the value on the sale of Canadian goods abroad of trips such as the one the Prime Minister made to southeast Asia need only contact any one of the 44 senior businessmen who travelled with me and who were signing contracts on a daily basis as a consequence of the Prime Minister paving the way.

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

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## GOVERNMENT RESTRAINT PROGRAM

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS—INCREASE IN WORKERS' WAGES

**Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough):** Madam Speaker, today we have heard many platitudes coming from the Government side on the terrific success of the six—

**Madam Speaker:** Order. I believe every single Member who asked a question today began by making a comment on the answer which had just been received. That must definitely be ruled out.

**Mr. Domm:** Madam Speaker, concerning the six and five program, I have a question I would like to ask of the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It stems from the fact that the six and five program was introduced in order to bring down inflation. It has been brought to my attention in my riding that adults employed on the Community Development Projects, unemployed people who gained employment under the Government's program, have received an increase over a two year period, of from \$158 a week to \$168 a week, which represents a 3 per cent annual increase in their incomes under the Government's program. Has the Government brought about a decrease in inflation on the backs of the unemployed?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, it is that kind of question which really becomes very vexatious. It is not really a very serious problem. Through the Community Development Projects we are trying to extend the amount of money which, this year, will amount to several hundreds of millions of dollars, to help as many unemployed people as we can. Those moneys are paid according to the minimum wage standards in each of the Provinces.

If the Hon. Member has a problem with how much is being paid, I would suggest that he take it up with his provincial counterparts on the adjustment of their minimum wage requirements in the Province of Ontario.