

*Oral Questions***TOURISM**

## EFFECT OF GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Tourism. The Canadian Automobile Association survey revealed that most Canadians who vacation by car are shortening or cancelling their trips because of high gas prices. Eighty-six per cent of them say that the price of gas influences their travel plans. Now that the Canadian price is 40 per cent above the U.S. price, comparing Fort Frances, Ontario, with International Falls, Minnesota, half a kilometre away, what will the Minister do to help the tourism industry, and indeed Canadians to see their own country?

**Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware of the concerns of the Canadian Automobile Association. In fact I met with the Association approximately a week ago. I do not think Canadians are as gloomy as is the Hon. Member. A Gallup poll was just released indicating that one in five Canadians across the country will be going to Expo in Vancouver. Most of them will be driving, so I think Canadians have a lot more faith in the Government and in our economy than has the Hon. Member.

## ATTENDANCE OF EASTERNERS AT EXPO 86

**Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Referring to the same survey to which the Minister in categorizing me as gloomy made reference, it showed that 10 per cent of eastern Canadians would attend Expo. What will the Minister do to increase that percentage?

**Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, the most positive thing the Government could do to increase the percentage of Canadians travelling in Canada this year is to keep interest rates down, and that is exactly what we intend to do.

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**THE ECONOMY**

## EXCHANGE VALUE OF DOLLAR

**Mr. Alan Redway (York East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Does he agree with the statement reported this weekend, made by his former adviser, Mr. William Mackness, to the effect that our dollar would be stronger if our interest rates were lower and closer to American interest rates?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the levels of the dollar and of interest rates are very closely intertwined. We have indicated in the past that, as we achieved a greater degree of stability in the exchange markets, which seems to be coming back this week, we will be able to see lower interest rates.

**Mr. Deans:** What? Seems to be coming back this week!

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** I am quite confident that the 9.5 per cent interest rate projection in my budget document is a fair projection and, as I indicated, is supported by people in the private sector, including Michael Bélanger, President of the National Bank.

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**THE DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPED**

## EFFECT OF BUDGET MEASURES

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance. He said a moment ago that he was very proud to help the very poor and that that was what his Government was all about. I want to ask him about what he has provided for the handicapped in the Budget. He offers a small increase in a deduction which he says will benefit 185,000 people. Why does *The Fiscal Plan* show at page 42 that, for its first full year of operation, that deduction will cost the Treasury nothing?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, we have done a number of things to help disabled people. First, we increased the deduction in the last Budget and in this Budget. Second, we broadened the definition of who qualified for the disabled deduction, and that was a major expansion. Third, we said that we would spend \$100 million to help those on social welfare to find jobs. Many of those people are disabled. We are trying to help them become more self-reliant. Those are three major changes in the Budget which are very important improvements for the disabled.

[Translation]

## SITUATION OF THE HANDICAPPED—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, the statistics of the Minister show that the cost is exactly zero.

I would like to ask him why, if he really wants to help the handicapped, he did not introduce a credit instead of a deduction so that more handicapped would benefit more and those who have lower incomes would have the same benefits?

[English]

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, let me respond to the question about why it was not effective in 1986-87. The effects of the change in this tax year will be felt in the next tax year as the tax return comes in. That is a specific answer.

**Mr. Kaplan:** It refers to 1986-87.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** If the Hon. Member wishes to ask me another question on it, I would be happy to respond.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood.