

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

IMPROVED ECONOMIC STATISTICS

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): I have nothing but good news, Mr. Speaker. Canadians continue to applaud the Government's increased job creation, low interest rates for consumer loans and mortgages, stable inflation, increased housing starts, and improved federal government finances.

Since September, 1984, some 660,000 jobs have been created, resulting in a decline in the unemployment rate from 11.7 per cent to its current 9.4 per cent. Over three-quarters of these jobs have been full-time. This compares with the previous Government's record of less than 20 per cent full-time job creation.

For the first time in almost 20 years, home buyers can obtain a six-month mortgage for 8 per cent. What a far cry from the 20 per cent to 22 per cent mortgage rates of six and seven years ago. Dreams of owning a home are once again a reality for thousands of additional Canadians as housing starts continue to rise to meet consumer demands. Our Government has met the challenge for an improved economy and all Canadians are benefiting.

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[*Translation*]

FOREST INDUSTRY

NECESSITY TO REPEAL TARIFF ON AMERICAN CHRISTMAS TREES

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, today Canadian Christmas tree producers came to Parliament Hill and tried to have the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) realize the situation in which he has placed them.

When the Minister of Finance levied a 30 percent duty on American Christmas tree imports, he jeopardized the very existence of Canadian producers who export for nearly \$90 million's worth of trees to the United States.

The Canadian Christmas tree industry is shaken because the Americans threaten to hit it with retaliatory measures.

Until now, the Minister of Finance has turned a deaf ear to the representations of our producers.

Time is of the essence, and the Minister must abolish the tariff on American trees, failing which American producers will ask for retaliatory measures that could mean the loss of thousands of jobs in Canada.

[*English*]

HEALTH

INCREASE IN INCIDENCE OF AIDS DISEASE

Mr. Jim Jepson (London East): Mr. Speaker, more and more Canadians are becoming increasingly alarmed by the increased incidence of AIDS. The latest medical evidence reports that the rate of disease in British Columbia has now risen to 65.6 per million people for the month of November compared to a rate of 46.6 in October. As of mid-December, 823 cases of the deadly AIDS virus were reported and 432 victims died as a result.

• (1415)

Education is certainly an important vehicle in making the public aware. However, we must recognize that the root of this problem lies with alternative lifestyles practised by some Canadians, including homosexuals and intravenous drug users. This has spilled over into heterosexual relationships in which one partner has practised both heterosexual and homosexual relations.

Unequivocally, we as a society should not encourage deviation from the norm of sexual relationships between men and women. With the passing of Bill 7 in Ontario by the provincial Liberal Government of Premier Peterson, the Ontario Government is doing just that. Clearly we must get to the root cause of this problem and not get sidetracked by surface issues.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ADMINISTRATION

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES—COMPLIANCE BY MINISTERS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, on July 24 last after the revelations about the former Minister of Regional Industrial expansion, I asked the Deputy Prime Minister in this House to take steps to ensure that Ministers were obeying the conflict of interest guidelines. The Deputy Prime Minister refused to do so saying that compliance was up to the Ministers. Now we have the spectacle of the blind trust of the Minister of State for Transport.

Again, are the Deputy Prime Minister and the Government prepared to take steps to ensure that these Ministers are not simply telling the Assistant Deputy Registrar General that they are complying with the guidelines but that in fact they are complying with the guidelines?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the process is very clear. The conflict of interest guidelines are established, and they are administered by the Assistant Deputy Registrar