

Oral Questions

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I am surprised the hon. member does not know the answer to that already. I had not been informed that he proposed to ask the question. The increase stems from the regrettable fact that unemployment is higher this year. That is the specific change this year. In addition, the act itself calls for the escalation of benefits as wages increase based on the industrial composite wages index. I must say that these payments are relieving some of the hardship which is taking place due to unemployment and are contributing, under these tensions, to a redistribution of income which I do not think is necessarily a bad thing.

Mr. Lawrence: Well, since the length of time during which benefits are paid has increased by 51 per cent compared with last year, may I ask whether the minister has any explanation to offer, other than the poor economic record of the government, in explanation of this massive increase?

Mr. Andras: Last year, as I recall, the duration of benefit went down from some 17 weeks the year before to 15.7 weeks. I would have to examine the figures the hon. member is quoting now, because the period has not, as far as I know, increased to the 17 week level of 1973. But, in all candour, I must say that as unemployment increases the length of the benefit period is inclined to be longer.

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MANPOWER**OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND STUDENT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS—REQUEST FOR EXPANSION**

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): In view of the fact that the unemployment rate for those in the age bracket between 14 and 25 has reached serious proportions, particularly among students, will the minister take action in the immediate future to expand programs already in existence such as OFY and student summer employment arrangements?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): A specific response in that sector is unlikely. As the hon. member will recall we considerably increased the allocation to the student summer employment program a few weeks ago. With that increase, additional programs for hiring students are now being approved under OFY and other pertinent schemes applicable to that policy.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CHEMICAL SPRAYING PROGRAM TO CONTROL SPRUCE BUDWORM—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the amiable Minister of the Environment. In view of the fact that a paper circulated to our offices recently states there is room for considerable refinement in the strategy of spruce budworm control and

considering that a "sex attractant" has potential for controlling the budworm population, would the hon. lady inform the House whether she has had an opportunity to reconsider my earlier proposition—

Mr. Hees: Explain!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Corbin:—for the resumption of financial assistance to chemical spraying programs to protect the eastern Canadian fir-spruce forests?

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of the Environment): I want to assure the hon. member that it is only coincidental that sex attractants are used to check the outbreak of spruce budworm. I want to tell the hon. member that I am not it. I do have a task force set up to study this serious problem. If the hon. member has read the reports already put out on this subject he would know that this is, really, a natural phenomenon. We find that spraying the trees, though it does diminish the infestation, does not really cure it. I have had a task force set up to try to find better ways of dealing with this question. Owing to budgetary restraints, however, we cannot increase the use of sprays this year.

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[Translation]

INDUSTRY**TEXTILES—IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF TEXTILE AND CLOTHING BOARD**

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Last February 14, the Textile and Clothing Board was asked by the Clothing Manufacturers Council to investigate the alleged dumping of suits, jackets, co-ordinates and men's and boys' slacks. Since the board's report was tabled on May 14, that it has serious consequences on manpower or employment, particularly in the Eastern Townships, can the minister say what action his department is taking to check the implementation of interim measures? In addition, did the minister, through preliminary consultation, get the assurance he would have the co-operation not only of manufacturers, but of unions also to protect jobs and increase them in the textile and clothing industry?

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): There has already been consultation with the industry. I tabled in the House earlier this week the report of the Textile and Clothing Board with respect to suits, pants and another item—and some technical word that goes with them; I am not too sure what that technical word is.

Mr. Mazankowski: Vests.

Mr. Gillespie: I indicated then that we were putting these products on the import control list. We are also in the process of negotiating voluntary restraints with