in face of growing international alternative sources of supply, in order that we can find ways to put those workers back to work in the long term, not merely to put them to work through the winter months with make-work, short-term projects.

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member will be well aware of the international situation in that the economies of other countries are, in many instances, in far worse condition than ours—

Mr. Clark: Not in Burma, not in India.

Mr. Regan: —with the result that the minerals produced from our mines are not in demand. The Hon. Member will recognize that when $3 of every $10 of our gross national product is accounted for by exports, it has a profound effect on our economy when the economies of other countries sag. What are we trying to do? I suggest that the quality of the Canadian miners is not the problem, nor the quality of our resources but, rather, the economic situations in those countries. What Canada is doing through the six and five policy—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Regan: —is to pursue a method of combating inflation, of seeing to it that this country will be in an excellent position to take part in recovery as it occurs across the western world, and that we will then continue to be able to sell our products in competition with any in the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT STORE INTEREST RATES

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. He will know, of course, that credit card companies and major department stores, such as Eatons, Sears and The Bay, are charging customers interest rates of 24 per cent to 28.8 per cent on retail credit. Recent reductions in interest rates mean that many of these companies are obtaining money at 12 per cent and lending it out at a cumulative rate of approximately 32 per cent, a 20 per cent interest spread. Would the Minister be prepared to acknowledge that this type of retail loan sharking is inflationary, is contributing to personal bankruptcy, and is not part of Government policy? Would he also be willing to say what action the Government is prepared to take to remove this type of obscenity from our economy?

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madame Speaker, the Hon. Member's question is based on a number of assumptions. He knows perfectly well that a consumer who purchases goods and uses a credit card to do so has thirty days to pay his bills. If he pays within the prescribed period, obviously no interest is charged.

[*English*]

Mr. Skelly: Madam Speaker, that is a completely disastrous answer.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Skelly: Basically, what we have is a type of policy which will give the rich, those with higher disposable incomes, 50 days of free interest on money they borrow, but that money is paid for by low and middle income Canadians who do not have the option of disposing of their bills on a 30-day basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PLIGHT OF LOW-INCOME CREDIT CARD USERS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, as a supplementary question, would the Minister please pull his head out of the sand and give some consideration to helping Canadians, especially those in low and middle-income brackets, to fight the kind of corporate power that is placed against them in this credit card situation? I urge him to act.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, if the Hon. Member wants to help middle-income Canadians, he should tell them to check first before deciding where they want to purchase goods. There is a lot of competition in this field, and in addition to department store credit cards, there are also those issued by banks, and rates vary. I would therefore invite the Hon. Member to check first before making this kind of allegation.

* * *

[*English*]

INCOME TAX

AVAILABILITY OF CORPORATE TAX FORMS

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Revenue I direct my question to the Minister of Finance. On the basis of best information, there are no corporate income tax forms for 1981, or 1982, available at any office of the Department of National Revenue or otherwise in Ontario. Would the Minister make the necessary inquiry and give us an answer now? This is not for a parliamentary secretary. This is a question which should be answered now. Can the Minister further advise whether instructions were given not to print the 1982 returns until the Ways and Means Motion had been brought in and the whole income tax situation clarified?

Mr. Garnet M. Bloomfield (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I would like to apologize to the Hon. Member for those forms not being available in Edmonton. I understand that is a very local