

of health issues that may manifest themselves at the work site.

There is clearly much yet to be done and I support the joint efforts of employers, employees and government in achieving the health and safety objectives toward which we are all working.

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CANADIAN COMPETITIVENESS

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, today we learned that despite a year of prosperity initiative propaganda our ranking in the world competitiveness report has dropped from fifth to 11th, behind such industrial powerhouses as Ireland and Finland. Again, our real problem is not the workforce but the people who manage it. Our workers are ranked eighth, our managers fifteenth.

• (1410)

Worse still, in R and D we are 17th. Meanwhile, the actions of the federal government amount to little more than fiddling while the R and D infrastructure burns.

The Science Council has gone. The Prime Minister's promise to double spending on R and D is gone. All we have had is a massive cross-country prosperity show. The Science Council described these consultations as mere proxies for leadership and condemned the lack of government action.

Yes, Mr. Prime Minister, you were right about our being in the junior B league of competitiveness. Clearly what we need is major league management. It is time to fire the coach.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, the first quarter 1992 results for the economy released by Statistics Canada confirm the recovery is continuing and at an improved pace over that of the second half of last year.

In fact, at a 1.7 per cent annualized rate the output increase in the first quarter was stronger than all analysts had been expecting. Exports were the key source of strength in the quarter with real exports increasing over 15 per cent, reflecting the success of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

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It flows as well from the improving competitiveness of the economy instilled by government policies in the restructuring taking place in Canadian businesses.

The evidence of growth in its composition should buoy confidence in the economy. Most forecasters will revise their 1992 annual average growth rates back up to the 2 to 2.3 per cent range. Some no doubt will go higher. This will put them back in the range the Minister of Finance has consistently referred to since Statistics Canada revised 1991 growth after the budget.

The undue pessimism of some forecasters such as the Conference Board will now surely stand in even greater contrast. We are clearly on the right track. We must stay the course. Clearly the Minister of Finance and his predecessor have served Canada well.

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EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, Rudy Wilczek, my constituent, and 25 of his co-workers at Revenue Canada's Pearson airport customs and excise office, postal division, will have a hard time celebrating Canada's 125th birthday on July 1. They will be waiting for the unemployment office to open on July 2 to join the growing list of unemployed people in Toronto.

As of July 1 the customs and excise branch will hand off responsibility for collecting duties on international mail to Canada Post. Canada Post has retained employment agencies and a few students to do the work formerly done by customs and excise officers. The employment agencies will cost more than the officers did.

Worse yet, Revenue Canada, which for months has promised to find jobs for these displaced workers in other divisions issued lay-off notices to them effective July 1. Every time this group of Canadians watches one of the government's expensive feel-good ads for Canada's 125th birthday, they, like many unemployed people in Toronto, cannot help but feel the painful irony of this government.

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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of all members of the House the seventh annual Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week. It began yesterday and continues until this coming Saturday, June 27.