

Because there is no existing legislation to prevent this activity, will the minister agree to look into the situation and either act himself to prevent it from continuing or urge provincial governments to do the same?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, it is a very important issue.

As my hon. friend should know we do not have real jurisdiction on that. It is under provincial jurisdiction. Given that right now interest rates are around 8 per cent for a mortgage it is very good. That is the lowest interest rate over the last eight years.

Some hon. members: Where, where, where?

Mr. Blais: It is everywhere in the papers today. I understand that it is a very important problem. I will ask my deputy minister to be involved with their counterparts at the provincial level to look at this important matter.

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EXPORT MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, after only seven months the funds for the program for export market development have been spent for this year, and that at a time when Canada for the first time in 15 years has registered a trade deficit.

Is it the government's intention to transfer more funds into the program without further delay, or has it now decided simply to let it fall by the wayside?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the government is very happy indeed that the PEMD has been so successful. We have had so many applications that we have indeed run out of money in that particular program.

What we are going to do is to seek further funding from existing budgets and transfer it to PEMD.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, three years ago the government undertook a study evaluating all its export promotion activities. Was this current lack of funding for PEMD not foreseen? When will the government table its report on its export promotion activities, or is this yet another example of the government delaying action behind the facade of more and more consultations?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, I would think it is exactly the opposite. In fact it

is a good illustration of how successful we are becoming in terms of promoting exports in the prosperity agenda. We have had many applications, far more than ever before, for the PEMD operation. That is exactly what I assume this House wants.

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[Translation]

ENERGY

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The last budget and the estimates clearly set out the government's energy priorities. In its budgetary choices, the government allots sixteen times more money to polluting energies than to clean energies. The green plan tells us that environmental studies should have been done a long time ago on all government policies, including energy policies. My question is this. When will the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources do his homework as promised?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. member that I think his characterization of clean energy and alternate energy is not accurate.

For instance, does he want the minister of energy to abandon the oil industry in Canada? Does he want the minister of energy to abandon the gas industry in Canada? Does he want the energy minister of Canada to abandon coal? Does he want the energy minister to abandon hydraulic power?

I say to the hon. member that there has to be a balance. That is why we brought in an alternate energy program. I announced another aspect of it in Winnipeg last week. We got good publicity on it even during the time of a great Grey Cup in Winnipeg.

Therefore I say to the hon. member that he should do his homework and he will see that we have been doing it.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, all I really want is for the government to do what it promised in the green plan; nothing more, nothing less. I will ask my question and perhaps the Minister of the Environment would like to try to answer it.

The budget is one of the most important environmental tools at a government's disposal. The green plan states clearly and I quote: "An environmental assessment will be made public at the same time that