

*Oral Questions*

infrastructure, a national highways policy, and I think he will be encouraged by that.

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, in fact there was no new money committed by this government to the program which the Federation of Canadian Municipalities suggested of \$1.5 billion a year, something that would have put 63,000 people back to work. I say to the government that that is shameful.

I want to ask not just about the infrastructure program but about transfer payments too. Why will this government not simply admit that it is wrong to pay only 31 per cent of the cost of the Canada Assistance Program for the province of Ontario when it promised to pay 50 per cent of those costs? Why will the government not pay its share for the cost of the recession which it created?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, transfer payments to the province of Ontario have risen at an annual rate of 6.2 per cent per year since 1984–85. That is an increase of over 60 per cent since 1984–85, a total of \$10 billion out of the \$39 billion that will be provided to the provinces in fiscal transfers and in tax transfers.

The premier of Ontario wants us either to tax more or drive up the deficit. He even went as far as saying that he might want to take a bit away from the have not provinces in the form of equalization payments.

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**DRYDEN AIR CRASH**

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the Dryden air crash.

When the Deputy Prime Minister was Minister of Transport, he stated in this House on January 30, 1986 that safety was the number one priority with regard to air safety. Again on the issue of air safety, on June 27, 1986 the Deputy Prime Minister who was the Minister of Transport at the time said, and I quote: "Neither are we prepared to sacrifice safety, nor shall we".

My question for the government is this: Why did the Deputy Prime Minister mislead Canadians?

**Mr. Speaker:** Just a minute. The hon. member has set up a preamble and then put a question: "Why did the Deputy Prime Minister mislead Canadians?"

The hon. member may want to say: Why did he inadvertently mislead Canadians, but the way the question was put I think it is a straight allegation that

whatever he was doing must have been pretty well intentional.

I would ask the hon. member who knows that we cannot accept that to consider his position and put a question which I can accept.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the government was negligent at the time. The minister assured this House and assured Canadians that it was safe to travel the skies, to take aeroplane rides in this country. We now know, through the work of a royal commission and through the words of a Supreme Court judge, that this accident was allowed to happen. Someone had to allow this accident to happen.

Surely the issue is one of responsibility. This government and that minister must take responsibility for the fact that 24 people were killed in an airline crash at Dryden in 1989. Will the minister accept responsibility on the part—

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sorry, but I think the questions are moving rapidly out of order. I am going on to the next question.

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**TRADE**

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the First Ministers' Conference on the economy reached little agreement on any questions of substance, and that at the very time the United States and Mexico are marshalling all their resources to take advantage of North American free trade.

In place of the so-called prosperity agenda that this government launched, what is this government prepared to do to help Canadians meet the competitive challenges of freer trade? Why must it take three more years to achieve freer trade even among our own provinces?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I have to respond to both the preamble and the question.

The government has done a number of things to help companies become more competitive. Five items in the recent budget of the Minister of Finance are directly related to improving the competitiveness of Canadian companies. Just before Christmas there was a package of announcements that helped the trucking industry meet the competitive challenges it is facing. Those are two examples that provide in a very fundamental way assis-