

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, during the meeting that I had with the provincial treasurers and ministers of finance I took the position that there was no equalization payable as a result of division of the export tax. I have not communicated that opinion to my colleagues at the provincial level. That opinion, as other legal opinions, I take to be privileged to the federal government.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Has the minister communicated on behalf of the government of Canada in a formal way, or at least in a definite way, to the provinces that the provincial share of receipts from the oil export tax will not be subject to equalization as far as the federal government is concerned?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I took the position that under the present law and regulations it was not so chargeable.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for taking the time of the House, but may I ask the minister whether he has communicated this to the provinces, and has he received any protest from any provinces?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, it was the subject of virtually one day's discussion at the ministerial level by the ministers of finance at the end of January, and some of the provinces, of course, were not particularly entranced with my stand.

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[Translation]

**MANPOWER****AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' PROGRAM—POSITION OF GOVERNMENT**

**Mr. Jean-Marie Boisvert (Drummond):** Mr. Speaker, the minister being absent, I should like to put a supplementary to the question addressed to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

The parliamentary secretary has just said that the program for agricultural labour is under study. As this is March 19, will the minister pass his tests fast enough for the farmers to benefit from the program this summer?

[English]

**Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the government is very conscious of the urgency of this question and it is being speedily implemented.

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**INDUSTRY****GENERAL INSTRUMENT CORP., SYDNEY, N.S.—REDUCTION IN WORK FORCE—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO FIND EMPLOYMENT FOR WORKERS AFFECTED**

**Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and is related to the question I posed to him on Wednesday with reference to the reduction in

[Mr. Stanfield.]

the work force of approximately 1,000 employees at General Instrument Corporation of Sydney by some 300 employees. Since that time there has been another lay-off of 80 employees. The minister said that he would have his officials contact the principals of this corporation to ascertain what might be done. Is the minister in a position to give a further report to the House?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that my officials have been in contact with the company, but I am not in a position to state further what particular measures might be taken.

**Mr. Muir:** May I ask the minister whether, during the discussions with the superiors or great leaders of this company, he would ascertain if the reason for their moving out of Sydney due to lack of demand for automobile radio tuners is a legitimate one, or is the reason because they want to go to countries like Mexico, Portugal or Taiwan where they pay starvation wages? Would the minister assure us that he will bring a report back?

● (1450)

**Mr. Gillespie:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to go into that further. I might say at this time the advice I have received is that the reason for the lay-offs is the reduction in sales of automobiles in the United States. That has been the primary reason for the shortfall in sales this year.

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**FINANCE****EFFECT OF REMOVAL OF SALES TAX ON CHOCOLATE BARS IN LAST BUDGET IN LIGHT OF PRICE INCREASE**

**Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Can the minister tell the House if the purpose of his most recent budget of 13 months ago, which removed the sales tax on near-food products such as chocolate bars, is succeeding in benefiting Canadians both in the form of lower prices and more value for their money in light of the fact that the largest confectionery manufacturer in Canada will increase the price of chocolate bars and it is anticipated that related manufacturers will also follow this action?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, a survey taken by a monitoring system for my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs showed that in the period of five or six months after the sales tax was taken off those commodities there was a beneficial result. It may well have retarded an increase in price. Any increase in price may have reflected an increase in cost. As a matter of fact, it might well have kept the size of chocolate bars the way it is.

**Mr. McKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also to the Minister of Finance. The budget speech said that the price would be lower. It is now higher. Has the minister any additional steps in mind in respect of action to prevent consumers having to face yet another price increase?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary North.