

and has to do with national housing. I wonder if the minister has received representations from the Ontario Association of Real Estate Boards asking for the removal of the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pugh: Has the minister given consideration to these representations for the tax removal?

Mr. Nicholson: Consideration has been given. No change is contemplated.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

REPRESENTATIONS TO U.S. RESPECTING CUBAN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Barry Mather (New Westminster): I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. A few days ago the hon. gentleman said an investigation was under way into the activities of Cuban nationalists in connection with bombings in Canada, and told us that discussions between Canada and the United States were taking place on this situation. Does he intend to add to this information today?

Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Prime Minister): I cannot report further at the moment.

[Translation]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

INQUIRY AS TO STEPS TO DEAL WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Since the minister promised yesterday to study the latest report on unemployment in Canada, could he tell us whether he actually did so and whether he intends to take special measures with a view to checking the tremendous increase in unemployment in Quebec which has reached a very high level?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I had the opportunity since yesterday to look more closely at the unemployment statistics. Compared to last year, unemployment has increased by .4 per cent, that is, it reached 5 per cent last year, while it now stands at 5.4 per cent for the whole country. There are 40,000 more jobless

Inquiries of the Ministry

than at the same date last year and it must be kept in mind that 28,000 of those 40,000 have been out of work for less than a month.

It should also be realized that the Canadian labour force has increased by more than 200,000 during the year. It is interesting to note that those 200,000 workers, or 214,000 to be more precise, include 142,000 women and 72,000 men, which means that women enter the labour market much more rapidly than men and explains why the percentage of unemployed women is higher than that of men.

Mr. Grégoire: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Now that the minister has found all possible excuses, could he tell us what measures he intends to take in order to check this increase in unemployment?

[English]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I ask the Minister of Manpower and Immigration whether his analysis of these unemployment figures to which he has just referred indicated that the increase of 40,000 in the number of unemployed is related in any way to the decline in housing and construction starts in January and February?

Mr. Marchand: I can say that specific factors are responsible for these figures rather than any major change in the economy. Among these factors is a decline in automobile purchases; some decline in house building in many parts of the country, and an unusually severe winter. This may answer part of the question put to me by the hon. member for Lapointe.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington South): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question. In the minister's analysis he did not make any reference to the number of people laid off due to displacement in the car industry. Has he any figures on that?

Mr. Marchand: Yes—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think we are getting into details of debate and I suggest to the hon. member that his question should not be asked now.

INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Ed. Schreyer (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the