

EFFECT OF SALES TAX REDUCTION ON BUILDING MATERIALS
ON COST OF HOMES—POSSIBLE PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO
PASS ON REDUCTION

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): A supplementary. Has there been any effect with regard to the reduction in the cost of homes as a result of the sales tax reductions and—my third supplementary, Mr. Speaker—does the minister intend to impose any fines or penalties if the sales tax reduction is not passed on to home purchasers?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer yet if that has been passed on, but I am watching the situation very carefully. I have no statutory power to impose fines but we have the interesting powers of lending or not lending.

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FINANCE

SUGGESTED REVISION OF BUDGET FORECASTS IN VIEW OF
LACK OF GROWTH IN THE ECONOMY AND FOREIGN TRADE
DEFICIT

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. On the eve of the budget presentation I asked the minister whether he would be tabling any interim economic reports to see whether the economic conditions had been considered up to the date of the budget. He indicated to me that he did not want to discuss the Statistics Canada report of no growth in the economy in the last two quarters. We now have the report from Statistics Canada with regard to the half billion dollar deficit of current commodity international trade. The minister replied that he did not want to spoil the symmetry of his speech. Now that these documents are available and public, is the minister prepared to revise his economic prospects forecast in the budget when he said he expected a growth of 4 per cent to 4½ per cent for this year and also his rather optimistic view about international trade. It seems to us that we need something more forthcoming from the minister.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman goes back over that speech and reads it in all its symmetry, he will find there were two soft spots in the economy with which I was concerned. One was housing and the other was falling exports because of the flat and even negative economies of our three largest customers. There is nothing in the recent figures which causes me any surprise.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question was whether the minister would give the House and the country the reports that he obviously has if he did make reference to a softening in the international trade situation. Of course, this came out a short time after. My question is, did the minister have these reports or not at the time?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, we did not have those reports. We had some very strong indications of the state of the economies of our trading customers. One of the purposes of my visits to Europe and the United

Oral Questions

States prior to the budget was to make a personal estimate of the strength of those economies.

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ABORTION

REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF LAW

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Justice deals with a request made by medical doctors in Saskatchewan for a clarification of the abortion laws. I may state at this time that I am on the same wavelength as the minister in this respect, I think. Would his department work on bringing forth legislation to clarify this matter not only to the laymen in the country but to all medical doctors, in the near future?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, in the ordinary course when legislation has been adopted, any clarification that may be required comes when proceedings are taken before the appropriate courts. In this particular case, I think I may follow up the receipt of the letter by having some discussion with the attorney general of Saskatchewan who, of course, is charged with the administration of the criminal law.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

INQUIRY AS TO PAYMENT OF FAMILY ALLOWANCES TO
NON-RESIDENTS

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Is it the policy of the government to make family allowance payments to non-resident alien families who at one time resided in Canada for a short period?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think that information might better be sought by the order paper.

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FISHERIES

REQUEST FOR COMPENSATION FOR LOBSTER FISHERMEN FOR
LOSSES AS RESULT OF STORM

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question for the Minister of Fisheries. In view of the damage to equipment suffered by the lobster fishermen along the south shore of Nova Scotia during the December 2 storm—a storm which has destroyed some 65 per cent of the traps in some areas—has the minister worked out any program with his counterpart in Nova Scotia to help compensate the fishermen for their losses? If so, when can we expect an announcement from the government concerning plans in this regard?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)): Mr. Speaker, officials of my department have been in touch with officials of the government of Nova Scotia on this question. I have also had some communication with