

[English]

REASON FOR REFUSING TO REVEAL ANALYSES AND FORECASTS  
FOR 1977

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The important part of my question was whether the government had any analyses of economic forecasts upon which it bases its position? I ask this since the Minister of Manpower and Immigration on November 22, when replying to a question I asked, said in part, as reported on page 1221 of *Hansard*:

I would say to the hon. member that obviously we have forecast information on which we base our judgments, but I think it would be inappropriate to put this up as a target for the opposition critics to shoot at.

Surely, such reasons for refusing to divulge analyses and economic forecasts are unacceptable. Therefore, why will not the minister or some other minister of the government reveal, for the benefit and edification of the Canadian people, analyses and economic forecasts pertaining to the year 1977? I am not prepared to accept the stupid reason given by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Surely the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce would be prepared to answer the question, because the people of Canada need to know what the situation is to be in 1977.

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I do not have much to add to the remarks of the hon. member, but I would advise him to read the last budget speech. It includes all the government economic data established by the Minister of Finance. When we will be proposing the next budget, the hon. member will once again be in a position to treat himself to statistics.

● (1430)

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT—GOVERNMENT'S VIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF  
PROBLEM

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the Conference Board's forecast on the economy which predicts even higher unemployment levels next year, is the government now prepared to admit that unemployment is Canada's number one problem and that it can be tackled without inflating the economy, as has been pointed out by the Conference Board?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add to the policy statements that have been made by the Minister of Finance on the subject of unemployment and inflation. The Minister of Finance has already indicated the priorities of the government in this field. It is not my intention to change them today.

POSSIBILITY OF REDUCTION OF TAX FOR LOWER AND MIDDLE  
INCOME GROUP TO STIMULATE CONSUMER DEMAND

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Acting Minister of Finance. In view of

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the fact that we have legislation before us now which will reduce the tax load only for people in higher tax brackets, and in view of the fact that a reduction of the tax load in lower and middle tax brackets would have a far greater effect in stimulating consumer demand to take up the slack in the economy, will the acting minister tell the House if he is prepared to take this step and, if not, what action will he take to stimulate consumer demand?

**Mr. Bob Kaplan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the budget measures that are now before the House have been before the House for a long time. I hope hon. members will shortly be putting them into law. As for a future budget, the Minister of Finance has already indicated a new budget will be forthcoming which will take into consideration many or all of the matters raised by hon. members in the question period.

**Some hon. Members:** When?

**Mr. Kaplan:** As to when, it will be in the first six months of next year.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

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### HOUSING

POSSIBILITY OF MEASURES TO STIMULATE CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Acting Minister of State for Urban Affairs, if there is an acting minister. In view of the Conference Board's prediction that housing starts will be down some 30,000 units in the coming year, has the minister in charge of housing any new initiatives he will be presenting to the House early in the new year to take up this slack in housing production?

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that housing starts for 1976 were above what we expected them to be. We set a quota of one million starts in four years. We are better than half way through that mandate and we think we can continue with it. We are confident at this stage that we have more or less surpassed our commitment. We have every confidence that next year there will be at least 235,000 starts.

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### REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT OBJECTIVE OF GRANTS NOT  
DEFEATED

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. Inasmuch as a number of plants in receipt of grants under the Regional Development Incentives Act are experiencing serious