

Business Briefs

Trade

Europeans doubt U.S. trade statistics

Well-placed Swiss and London financial analysts are expressing a mixture of suspicion and outright disbelief at the recently released U.S. trade data for November.

According to reports circulating in European financial circles, the November data employed "creative accounting," including techniques such as shifting huge aerospace export orders between months in order to produce the dramatic 25% reduction announced Jan. 15.

Sources spoken to by *EIR* say the manipulation of the data will at most buy a month or so of time before the dollar again begins to decline. "And if [Treasury Secretary James] Baker tries to reduce interest rates, this would be the immediate signal for a 'free-fall' dollar," one well-placed London broker stated.

AIDS

N.H. lawmakers consider range of bills

The New Hampshire state legislature is considering a bill that would spend \$2 million to broaden AIDS education. But opponents claim that it could damage the insurance industry by preventing them from testing and rejecting AIDS-positive policy applicants. Other bills being considered range from ID cards for those who are AIDS-negative and mandatory testing of "high-risk groups," to a needle-exchange program for drug addicts.

According to AP, "The measure would set up AIDS education programs for high-risk groups, including homosexual men and intravenous drug users, students, health care providers, police officers, and firefighters. It would help finance voluntary AIDS testing and certify laboratories to ensure high standards, and would require informed consent and confidentiality in testing.

"The bill also would provide for counseling and follow-up investigation for people who tested positive, and money for 8 new staff people for the Public Health Division."

Endorsers include the New Hampshire Public Health Division, the New Hampshire Nurses Association, the Medical Society, and the Citizens' Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Rights.

Other AIDS bills considered by the House Committee would:

- Appropriate \$1 million in the next fiscal year to educate the public, certify laboratories, and perform mandatory testing of high-risk groups.

- Establish a committee to study housing for homeless AIDS carriers, prohibit discrimination against them, and set up a program to reduce transmission by employing reformed intravenous drug users as outreach workers.

- Establish a committee to examine a one-use needle distribution program.

- Mandate AIDS testing in county jails.

- Criminalize the deliberate transmission of AIDS to sexual partners and intravenous drug users.

- Allow people testing negative to carry a photo-identification card saying so.

Credit Markets

New York to invest pensions overseas

The New York City Retirement System, one of the largest public pension funds in the nation, with more than \$30 billion in assets, "plans to invest a large portion of its assets in foreign bond markets amid concern that the dollar could remain a relatively weak currency in the years ahead," reported the Jan. 18 *Wall Street Journal*.

This follows a similar move by California's Public Employees' Retirement System, the *Journal* observed. California's system is the nation's largest, with \$42 billion in assets.

According to the *Journal*, "Some bond specialists say the amount [New York in-

vests] could run into billions of dollars and wind up being the largest non-dollar fixed-income program in the nation."

California, by contrast, plans to invest \$1 billion initially, and "up to \$2 billion, eventually," according to Greta E. Marshall, investment manager for the state retirement system.

The *Journal* took the stance that the New York and California moves merely "signal the first major push into foreign bonds by state and municipal money managers." The paper quoted Paul Quirk, who heads up Boston's Pensions Reserves Investment Management Board, who said, "We didn't own any non-dollar bonds, but I wish we had. . . . There's no question there will be pressure for higher interest rates and a lower dollar."

Quirk also said he believed the U.S. government would "support the dollar to save the election" for the Republicans, and then "let it fall to about 100 yen."

Public Health

AIDS computer model backs universal screening

Dr. Allan Salzberg, Chief of Medical Services at the Veterans Hospital in Miles City, Montana, has developed a computer model of the spread of AIDS, which serves to forecast a horrendous picture within a decade unless measures are taken to halt the diseases spread.

By 1995, the model indicates, the number of sick and dead in the United States could approach 5 million, with an additional 14 million carriers. One-quarter of those infected by then will be from the "low-risk" population.

A precis of Salzberg's work appears in the Dec. 18 *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, along with a letter he wrote to the journal.

In his letter, the doctor states that more stringent measures may be required than mere restraint on the part of those who know they are carriers. In the article, he states that the only way to stop the catastrophic spread