

[English]

CURRENCY

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BANK NOTES—CONSIDERATION FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, there are probably many reasons to introduce a new series of Canadian bank notes at this time. However, none is more important than the opportunity this gives the Bank of Canada to make the different denominations of those notes distinguishable by the blind and visually impaired. The visually impaired welcome the larger, more distinct numerals, as well as the distinct dominating colour of each denomination.

For years the sightless have wanted these notes made distinguishable by the use of Braille, an economic system which they will all use. They do not need to speak to the note, nor do they have to be burdened with the use of a separate electronic scanner. It is to be hoped that the machine-age for the handling of our money does not, in itself, become the major deciding factor. In the end result, the Bank of Canada is to be commended on its consideration for this disadvantaged sector in our Canadian populace.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

EXPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday's 1 per cent drop in the bank rate is further evidence of the strength of the country's economy and the success of the Government's policies. Together with lowering interest rates, a quick survey of today's economic indicators will reveal further good news: 4 per cent inflation, 9.8 per cent unemployment, and 5 per cent GNP growth.

Numbers alone cannot truly reflect the true spirit of confidence and optimism that has swept the country from coast to coast. Last weekend I had the opportunity to meet many Canadians from every region of the country. In one way or another each one of them expressed to me the same message—Canada is working again. That, Mr. Speaker, is an economic indicator which cannot be assigned a number, but nevertheless speaks volumes of the confidence Canadians have in their economy and their Government.

* * *

THE DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPED

EFFECT OF PUBLIC SERVICE LAY-OFFS

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about employment opportunities for the disabled in the federal Public Service. It is hard to find a permanent job these days, and it is even more difficult for the disabled. In 1984-85 the vast majority of disabled persons hired by the Public Service Commission were hired in limited

S.O. 21

or term positions. With Tory Government cut-backs, term positions are among the first to go, thus leaving many disabled unemployed. I personally know of some of these disabled people being laid off at the end of this very month.

• (1410)

It is obvious that all the Tory Government does about employment equity is talk about it. Once again the Government continues to place a higher priority on the deficit and statistics and numbers, as did the last speaker, than on people.

* * *

THE PRESS

IMPORTANCE OF WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS—COMPETITION POSED BY CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, no sector of the media is as cherished as our weekly newspapers. They have served rural Canada for a century. Filled with tidbits of local interest, most weekly newspapers stay in the house until they are completely read from front to back. Unfortunately, the small entrepreneurs who provide the nation's weekly newspapers are in a mean and unfair fight with Canada Post.

Community newspapers are perpetually losing subscriptions because the Post Office cannot deliver the papers in a respectable time. Yet in spite of that, and irrespective of the fact it causes financial hardship for publishers, Canada Post has the gall to assume the privilege to undercut these papers in marketing ad mail. How legitimately angry the publishers must be to realize that their tax dollars are used to subsidize Canada Post in an unfair competition for ad mail services.

* * *

FINANCE

TAX TREATMENT OF LAID-OFF NORTHERN MINERS

Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, workers at Stelco's Griffith Mine in the Ear Falls-Red Lake region of northwest Ontario have suffered a double blow. First they were told the mine would close at the end of this month. Secondly, they cannot get an answer from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). The Minister twice in this House committed the Government to give tax relief to laid-off workers in isolated communities. He said this on November 8, 1984, in the economic statement, and in the May 23, 1985, Budget. The Minister of State for Mines (Mr. Layton) specifically promised equal treatment for Griffith Mine workers on November 16, 1984.

At a meeting in June, 1985, nine months ago, Stelco executives met with Ministry of Finance officials to present the need for a tax remission. Yet as of today no remission order has been issued. The mine closes in two weeks. When will the Minister make good his word and spare the workers of the Griffith Mine this unfair and frustrating delay?