

Oral Questions

I remind the Hon. Member that the Provinces waste no opportunity to remind the federal Government that municipalities are their responsibility, not ours, and that anything concerning the municipalities should be under the jurisdiction of provincial Governments.

I think the solution is more through the federal and the provincial Governments working in co-operation, and I hope that through this co-operation we will indeed be able to do as much as can be done for those who see their unemployment insurance benefits expire.

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS**ANNOUNCEMENT OF BANK BRANCH CLOSURES**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Recently the Bank of Montreal announced that it would close 100 branches across Canada. The Royal Bank announced that it will close a number of branches and cut back on the hours some of its branches are open. This will have a very serious effect upon employment in banks, and an even more serious effect upon the services which banks provide, particularly in one-industry towns such as Wabush, Newfoundland, Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, and Barrière, British Columbia. Will the Minister investigate the serious effects these closures and cutbacks will have on employment in the industry and on the level of service of banks, which is so important to meeting the needs of Canadians? Will he discuss these decisions by the banks with their senior officials?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am somewhat surprised the question should be directed to me. I shall, of course, look into the matter. I will discuss it with my colleague, the Minister of Finance. As for services being withdrawn from certain communities, I am sure that in this very competitive area, when one bank branch closes, perhaps another bank will open a branch in the same location to provide this service. Otherwise, perhaps the Canada Post Corporation, through its many post offices across Canada, could provide this kind of service to people who have been abandoned by the banks.

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[English]

HEALTH**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGING**

Mr. Vince Dantzer (Okanagan North): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Minister will recall that last summer there was a conference on aging in Vienna and that there was a strong Canadian delegation, due no doubt to her efforts. Shortly after

the conference reports were circulated that the Minister intended to follow up the conference with an all-Canadian conference on aging. Is there any truth to that statement? Does the Minister plan to call a Canadian conference on aging in the near future, or at all?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I hope the Hon. Member is not my official critic on pension matters, because this was announced officially last September. I could send him copies of the speech which I repeated to more than one audience. The National Conference on Aging, by and with Canadian participation here in this country, to follow up on the international conference last summer in Vienna, will take place in Canada in the month of June.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Withdraw Bill C-131 as the first step.

Mr. Dantzer: I am glad that I am the critic on pensions, but I become very discouraged being that critic.

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PENSIONS**PRODUCTION OF GREEN PAPER**

Mr. Vince Dantzer (Okanagan North): Madam Speaker, I have repeatedly asked the Minister when we will have the green paper on pensions. Perhaps she could tell us today precisely when the paper will be released.

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to announce that the green paper on pensions will be released in the second week of December. I am not sure of the exact date of the press conference.

Some Hon. Members: What year?

Miss Bégin: Hon. Members opposite are always mixed up about times. We are not talking about two or three years ago; we are talking about this year, in ten days' time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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ENERGY**PRICE CHARGED FOR UNLEADED GASOLINE**

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Senior officials of Environment Canada have charged that the oil companies are overcharging Canadians by as much as 12 or 13 cents a gallon for unleaded gasoline, considering the actual cost of production. The Government of Canada has apparently spent thousands of dollars on studies which have demonstrated, in the words of one of the Minister's officials, "The price difference between leaded and unleaded gasoline is absolutely ridiculous". What action has the Minister of the Environment