

Minister inform the House of the status of this situation and whether any progress has been made to eliminate the problem?

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, immediately following the court ruling in California, we contacted the Acting Solicitor General for the United States and asked him to launch an immediate appeal and also to apply for a stop order. We then went back to the judge in question, that is the Solicitor General did, and he issued a partial reprieve in which he ordered that any contracts entered into prior to August 28, 1985, would not be subject to his ruling. So people going down to repair machinery delivered under contracts prior to that date will not be stopped. That was a partial reprieve. The Solicitor General is now appealing that ruling as well.

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● (1450)

BANKS AND BANKING

CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANK—OFFER TO REVIEW ASSETS

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of State for Finance.

[*Translation*]

What a nerve! She just said we as a Government never did a thing! But I can tell you—

[*English*]

—this Government never blew \$1 billion and no other Government in Canadian history has ever blown a billion dollars. We want some answers here in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps members on the Government benches could allow me to hear the Opposition's question.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you. And no bank ever went bankrupt either. Yesterday the bankers finally made clear something that the Minister has waffled about consistently in this House, that they were ready, that they were willing and they were able to move in and review the assets of the Canadian Commercial Bank and they could have saved the taxpayers of Canada a billion dollars. Why did the Minister or the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister refuse to accept that offer? Tell us this time. You have not told us yet.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of statements made by different bankers as to how long it would take to examine the books of the Canadian Commercial Bank. There were some commercial bankers in there looking at that loan portfolio. They have made that clear. Some of them said that it would take quite a bit longer than others have said it would take.

We came to a collective decision that we had to make a decision quickly on this bank. We brought our collective judgment to bear on this and in the end everyone agreed that that was the action that was necessary, by Monday morning.

Oral Questions

GOVERNMENT DECISION

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, what was the collective decision? Who were part of the collectivity? Neither the Minister nor the Minister of Finance sat in that meeting during that fateful weekend. Will the Minister not confirm—we will throw her one more life-jacket—will she not confirm that the decision had already been made by the Prime Minister on the Friday so there was no point in reviewing the assets of the Canadian Commercial Bank?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Right on.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, this was a collective decision on behalf of this Government that was made by a partnership and a collective action by the Government—

Mr. Ouellet: Answer the question.

Mrs. McDougall: —a Government that stands together and makes its decision together in conjunction with the banking system—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. It seems reasonable if I ask members of the Government to let me hear the Opposition's questions that members of the Opposition would let me hear the Government's answer.

An Hon. Member: There are no answers.

Mr. Speaker: Maybe that will get on camera.

Mr. Ouellet: You are on camera now.

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CHARTER OF RIGHTS

PROPERTY RIGHTS—REQUEST FOR INCLUSION

Mr. Jim Jepson (London East): My question is for the Minister of Justice, the Hon. Member for St. John's West, and it is on the subject of property rights.

Until property rights are given full protection under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadians truly will not enjoy either the freedom or the security that is inherent in being a citizen of this great country.

Can the Minister tell us when we might expect this very important matter to be brought before Parliament?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman probably knows, that provision would have been in the Constitution and the Charter of Rights were it not for the members