

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE

QUEBEC SHIRT INDUSTRY—INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT
WILL ESTABLISH MORE PROTECTIVE POLICY

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance who is responsible for Canada's policy as it relates to international agreements on tariffs and trade, or to his minister of state.

For one year now the Canadian Institute of Clothing Manufacturers has been making repeated representations to the government, through the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, to emphasize the disastrous situation in which the shirt industry in Quebec finds itself, a situation made even worse by the government import policy on shirts from abroad. Is the minister or the minister of state prepared to explain to the House what representations have been made to the countries involved, either directly or through the general agreement on tariffs and trade, with a view to cushioning the harmful effect of that policy on that industry, or what efforts has he made within the government to change that policy?

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, the matter to which the hon. member refers in his question has been a subject of concern for this government for a number of years and the effectiveness of the measures taken by our government dates back to the days when the current Minister of Transport held the industry, trade and commerce portfolio. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is now examining the government's new policy in light of our obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the hon. member knows full well that our policy must be in keeping with the provisions of GATT Article XIX.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, the efforts of the government have led to negative results.

My second question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses. Bearing in mind that the Yamaska Shirt Company of Saint-Hyacinthe will close its doors on February 15 and lay off 115 or 125 workers, can the minister explain why he is so inefficient within cabinet, or so insensitive to the lot of his fellow countrymen, to the jobs of hundreds of workers in the Saint-Hyacinthe area, to the impending closure of other businesses, and to lay-offs at Trois-Rivières, Saint-Romuald, Saint-Denis-de-Richelieu, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Montréal, Saint-Georges-de-Beauce, Lachine—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I suppose there was a question in that long statement by the hon. member, so I will allow the minister to answer.

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses)): Madam Speaker, despite the hon. member's inefficiency in asking questions, I would like to tell him that we are now actively studying the recommendations of the report on textiles and clothing. We are very concerned about the current situation in the shirt industry and we hope that before the end of March we will be in a position to introduce legislation or to make an announcement on government policy based on the conclusions of the report on textiles and clothing.

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[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. YURKO—BIRTHDAY

Madam Speaker: I received a notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko). I must tell him that I received it just before the question period and since it does not flow from the deliberations of this House, and since he made no statement with respect to his question of privilege, I would ask him to supply me with a more complete statement. I will hear his question of privilege at another time.

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I wanted to indicate that I was wearing a red rose today because my wife, in collaboration with my staff, decreed that on this day, my fifty-fifth birthday, I was to wear a red rose. I wished to wear blue, but when I look at it it is red.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. NIELSEN—ACTING MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to the government House leader in his capacity as President of the Privy Council. Yesterday he tabled PC 1980-2824, which is a list of acting ministers and second acting ministers. The list does not indicate who will continue in the House to answer for the Wheat Board. The list does not indicate who will continue in the House to answer for the pipeline. May we assume that those responsibilities have not changed?

My second question is, can we place reliance upon this list, in view of the example today in which the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) directed a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) with respect to the economic development portfolio and it was answered by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin)? If that practice is to continue, perhaps the Minister of Transport should be designated to answer for economic development. May we have that clarified please?