

S.O. 21

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

APPLICATION COST INCREASES

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, new and would-be Canadians were shocked and disgusted when the Government more than doubled the citizenship application costs for adults, and more than tripled the application costs for minors. An average family of five will now have to pay \$155 rather than the previous amount of \$54. This unjustified increase is clearly a regressive and insensitive policy direction, one which will discourage rather than facilitate people's entry into the Canadian mainstream.

In its over zealous attempt to increase government revenues, the Conservative Government has abandoned the principle of compassion, undermined the spirit of multiculturalism, and has hit the very people who could least afford it. This policy, Mr. Speaker, is a sad reflection on a new Tory regime.

I urge the Secretary of State and the Minister of State for Multiculturalism to reverse this very unfortunate decision immediately and restore citizenship application costs to an affordable and fair level.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ADVERSE EFFECT ON FILLING SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT VACANCIES

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has made a thorough investigation and has determined that there are at least 170,000 job openings with small business which could be filled if our current unemployment insurance system did not give positive inducements to those collecting unemployment insurance benefits to stay unemployed.

Indeed, a person receiving unemployment insurance benefits is foolish to take a reduction in pay in order to obtain work because the net benefit, after taking into account income tax and the cost of going to and from work, leaves the person with less money than he would have received in unemployment insurance benefits.

The Government is to be commended for raising the matter of the unemployment insurance system in the financial statement. I call upon the Government, as should all Hon. Members of this House, to move ahead quickly so it can reorganize the present unemployment insurance system in order to create an incentive to those unemployed to upgrade their skills, to obtain training, and to take up jobs even if those jobs pay less.

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ENERGY

COST OF ELECTRICITY IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, Prince Edward Islanders pay the highest electrical rates in Canada,

about three times the national average. These electrical rates are detrimental to the economy of our province. Every person and every resource sector are at a distinct disadvantage when trying to compete in the marketplace. As an example, the national average cost of producing a litre of milk, based on farmers using 3,000 kilowatt hours of electricity, is 67 cents. The cost of producing that same litre of milk in Prince Edward Island is \$1.41. That is a total of 74 cents above the national average.

Maritime Electric recently announced that, because of the increase in crude oil prices which was introduced in the statement of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), electrical rates will rise by 4 per cent.

Agricultural production must remain viable in order to ensure the economic security of all Island residents. How can this industry expect to remain viable unless the Government follows through on its promise to reduce the cost of electricity to the islanders? Instead of reducing costs to these people, the Government is raising them. The Government promised to support the farmers and residents of Prince Edward Island, and it is now time that those promises were kept.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INDIA—DETENTION OF CANADIAN JOURNALIST

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It arises out of his Government's unfortunate handling of the case of Jonathan Mann, the Canadian journalist who is imprisoned by the Indian authorities. This is a case which has caused concern to Canadian journalists and even to the Foreign Correspondents Association in Washington.

Yesterday the Minister of External Relations said in the House:

Representations at the highest level have been made to India's Department of Foreign Affairs—

Yet the Secretary of State for External Affairs is quoted in *The Globe and Mail* as saying: "We cannot start the process of interfering with other countries in the application of their law". How does the Minister explain this contradiction? Why is he undermining his Minister for External Relations? Exactly what are the facts here? Why is the Minister acting less vigorously to protect the interests of a Canadian journalist than the French Government acted to protect the interests of the French journalist, Abouchar, and to get him released from Afghanistan?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Hon. Member for the precision of his question. Let me also take the opportunity to