

permitted individual athletes to come to Canada under the guise of independent business?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, our policy on sporting contacts with South Africa is fully in accord with the spirit and the text of the 1977 Gleneagle's Agreement on sporting contacts with South Africa, and the 1982 Code of Conduct.

With respect to the tennis players, participation in the Canadian Open tennis tournament is determined according to the international ranking of eligible players. These several persons, if they do apply for visas, will not fall within the Gleneagle's policy, because it is sports people who represent the South African Government—

• (1500)

Ms. Copps: Not true, and I've got a copy of it right here.

Mr. Crosbie: —sport associations, or organized South African sport, who fall within the policy.

Ms. Copps: That's false!

Mr. Crosbie: That is how the policy is applied. We will have to wait and see if and when they do apply for visas.

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BANKS AND BANKING

NSF CHEQUE CHARGES—SITUATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. About two weeks ago the Minister of State for Finance responded to the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs with respect to bank service charges and how they affected consumers. The Minister at that time referred to the charges, particularly the NSF charge-back, as reprehensible and objectionable.

In light of the fact the banks reluctantly withdrew the charge-back on NSF cheques for consumers, would the Minister not agree that what was reprehensible and objectionable for consumers is equally reprehensible and objectionable for small businesses?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this raises a broader question of which I am sure the Hon. Member is aware. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has had consultations with the Department. In fact Mr. Bullock had a meeting this morning with my colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, to discuss this whole question of bank charges as it relates to small business. We want to have further meetings with Mr. Bullock and his people, and following that we may have some further discussions with the banking community.

Oral Questions

ROYAL BANK SUGGESTION

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. We are very concerned about specifics with respect to the charge-back on NSF cheques. Rob Parker at the Royal Bank feels that the NSF charge-back to small business is justified. He says it is a cost of doing business, and further suggests that small businesses ought to use their credit card system to protect themselves. In light of that suggestion from Mr. Parker, would the Minister not agree that this is a form of tied selling which is specifically prohibited by the competition laws of our country? Would the Minister investigate this suggestion by the banks with respect to tied selling?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think the conclusion the Hon. Member has drawn is a somewhat far-fetched one—

Mr. Rodriguez: That's what Rob Parker said.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —but I am pleased to discuss that further with my colleague. Tied selling is a responsibility of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but both that Minister and my colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, will be in discussions with the banks. It is quite a bit more complex when the matter of bank charges involves the business community. It is much more difficult and complex as to how to deal with it, but we are looking at various proposals the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has put forward to us and we may want to take these up with the banking community as well.

Mr. Speaker: I want to advise the House that there will be a single question from the Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques followed by a single question from the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway. We will then close off Question Period.

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[Translation]

LABOUR RELATIONS

BELL CANADA STRIKE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I have a question about the strike at Bell Canada.

Canadian consumers continue to experience problems with communications, especially those who require the installation of new equipment and those who need operator assistance to make their calls, and I am thinking especially of the hand-capped.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has done very little so far to try and settle this dispute. All we have had was a kind of