

certain solutions which in the past were acceptable in the case of other non-government organizations?

Since funds will no longer be allocated to SUCO as of April 1, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Quebecers directly involved, I am asking the Minister to give me precise answers to precise questions.

Mr. Gimaiel: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should like to draw attention to the presence in the gallery of several young Canadians who are members of the Youth Forum—

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[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

DELAYS IN DELIVERY OF PENSION AND ALLOWANCE CHEQUES

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, in World War I, World War II, and during the Korean conflict, hundreds of thousands of Canadians came forward to serve their country and were prepared to give their lives to ensure that future generations of Canadians would live in freedom and peace in a democratic country. Today, many veterans, many veterans' widows, and many veterans' families depend solely on the pensions and allowances provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. These pensions and allowances are inadequate to meet their financial needs satisfactorily, and in parts of British Columbia these inadequate cheques often arrive many days late. For many individuals and their families this results in their not having sufficient funds to purchase food. It also forces veterans to stand in line-ups at local food banks, and to use welfare food vouchers.

These humiliating experiences are inexcusable. Our war veterans, their widows and their families, deserve much better. I urge the Minister for Veterans Affairs to take steps immediately so that those who were prepared to die for their country are able to live out their lives in dignity. They should be provided with a pension adequate to meet their needs, and the Minister should ensure that their cheques are mailed to arrive on time.

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● (1415)

MARINE TRANSPORT

CALL FOR IMPROVED ARCTIC NAVIGATION SYSTEMS

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, yearly the volume of shipping in Canadian Arctic waters increases, to the extent that it has now become commonplace. Merchant vessels and specialized offshore oil and gas explanatory equipment ply the waters, and we can look forward to the day when the Northwest Passage will be a well established and viable international trade route. To encourage these developments and ensure safety to mariners, the Government of Canada should continue to promote more detailed hydrographic sur-

veys, improved weather forecasting and ice reconnaissance, together with better electronic navigation systems.

The Canadian Coast Guard is to be complimented on its desire to increase Arctic ship safety, and on its plan to acquire icebreakers designed to Arctic specifications. The administration of the Coast Guard should be changed in due course to establish a northern region with headquarters in the North, in order to eliminate the problems caused by the present fractionalization of jurisdiction in the Arctic by the existing regional offices.

Furthermore, we need improved international co-operation between Canada, the United States, and Denmark, the states which border the Arctic Ocean and Northwest Passage.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS

EFFECT OF INCREASED INTEREST RATES ON JOB-CREATION POTENTIAL

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday in the House the Minister said in reply to my colleague, the Hon. Member for Halton, and I quote from page 2240 of *Hansard*:

For us the small business sector is the most important element in terms of job creation. We have shown our determination to support it with the measures in the Budgets of last April and last February.

I can agree with the Minister on that, Mr. Speaker. Two-thirds of the jobs in this country are created by the small business sector. But how does the Minister expect the small business sector to expand and create new jobs when, in the Minister's own estimation, interest rates will continue to go up?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if my friend checks what I said in the House yesterday, he will see that I have not indicated that interest rates will continue to go up. I have indicated that, if interest rates in the United States increase, it will be very difficult for Canada to keep interest rates lower than those in the United States for any extended period.

I have not forecast continuing increases in interest rates. The evolution of the situation will very much depend also on what will happen in the United States over the next few weeks and months.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER ACT TO OFFSET POSSIBLE INTEREST RATE INCREASES

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, if interest rates continue to expand—and this is not strictly hypothetical—this will more than offset what little there was