

taxpayers of Canada to come up with a billion dollars in bail-out money without providing a list of those people who will benefit from this bail-out? Whom is he trying to protect? Is this a cover-up? Are there firms that he does not want the people of Canada to know about in terms of this bail-out?

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** Masters of innuendo.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Innuendo has been flying around this place, starting with the Leader of the Opposition and now the finance critic of the NDP. I encourage him to bring those questions to the committee.

Let me say one thing to him; you can't say that one can treat one depositor this way and another depositor that way. All depositors are equal.

**Mr. Riis:** Who are they?

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** I remind him, if he would listen—

**Mr. Broadbent:** Why do you have an in-house committee then?

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** If his Leader would listen to the answer to the question, the depositors are a wide range of people, be they individual Canadians such as farmers, or small businessmen from a number of small communities in Canada. There are hospitals that are depositors. We have seen the City of Kanata as a depositor. There is a wide range of people as well as some of the major—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** They all have to be treated equally under the law.

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## EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

### PLACEMENT OF LEGAL BUSINESS

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister told us that he had nothing to do with Sam Wakim or Sam Wakim's firm getting the legal work of the Export Development Corporation. Therefore, I want to ask the Minister of State for International Trade who recommended that firm to the Export Development Corporation, and whether he or any members of his staff discussed with Mr. Wakim the prospect of the legal work which was to be awarded.

**Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, upon assuming responsibility for the Export Development Corporation we reviewed many of its activities and noticed that outside legal work amounted to \$1 million a year. We felt that other firms across Canada should have an opportunity to share in that work—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

## Oral Questions

**Mr. Kelleher:** We asked EDC to explore the possibility of retaining other legal firms. It said that it was prepared to do so if three criteria were met; expertise, an Ottawa office, and competitive rates. Weir and Foulds, a distinguished legal firm, met that criteria and were retained to do some of that work.

I would like to point out that EDC had been using that firm for legal work prior to the change in government.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

## DISCUSSIONS INQUIRY

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, this is very interesting information. However, I want to repeat my original question to the Minister. Before the legal work was awarded to the firm that Mr. Wakim just joined, did the Minister or any of his staff discuss the prospect of that legal work going to the new firm?

**Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Hon. Member to remember that the legal firm of Weir and Foulds was the one that was retained. Many lawyers, including Mr. Wakim—he was not the only one—discussed with me the possibility of doing legal work not only for EDC but other corporations that must report through me.

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## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

### IMPACT OF PENSION INCOME ON BENEFITS

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Inco Limited of Sudbury announced yesterday that it would have to reduce its work force by up to 1,000 employees, based on production. It is preferable to the community and the workers themselves that an early retirement program be offered to protect the jobs of the younger workers. One deterrent to that is the present change in the Unemployment Insurance Act regarding pension income. Is the Minister prepared to abandon, or at least postpone, that whole proposal for pension income being used in calculating unemployment insurance benefits?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I think we should be clear that the issue here is not unemployment insurance. The issue here is the behaviour of a company that has returned to a substantial profit margin—\$33 million in the first half of this year—has done that on the backs of the employees, and is now threatening the employees, and indeed the community, with further lay-offs. By its own estimates the company has said that a substantial number of employees will accept early retirement knowing the UI provisions. I want to say to the Hon. Member that I find that kind of corporate behaviour irresponsible, and I hope he would as well.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!