

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue):** Madam Speaker, my department is quite aware of the difficulties that small businessmen find themselves in at the present time. I have been consulting with my colleague, the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism. I can assure the hon. member that we have been in touch with the Canadian Federation of Independent Businessmen, and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and that we will be treating remittances on an individual basis.

● (1440)

I can assure small business of every possible latitude under the law. We understand their difficulties and will be taking them into consideration. There are arrangements for them to make their payments at chartered banks or offices of my department across the country. We will provide every possible latitude under the law.

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**CONSUMER AFFAIRS****PAYMENT OF INTEREST ON CREDIT CARD ACCOUNTS DURING POSTAL STRIKE**

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs but it touches on the minister's responsibility as Postmaster General so it will give him a real chance to show whether he is prepared to treat all Canadians fairly.

My question is in connection with what people are to do about interest charges on their credit card accounts during the postal strike. In view of the fact that only two provinces, Quebec and Alberta, have laws which protect consumers from paying interest charges until they know what the particulars are, can the minister say whether the federal government is considering any federal consumer protection law which will give all Canadians a chance to avoid paying interest on credit card accounts during the postal strike?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General):** Madam Speaker, this question re-opens the issue of whether it would be appropriate to have federal legislation in the area of consumer credit. The hon. member will recall that a few years ago, the liberal government introduced such a bill, which was then strongly criticized by the Progressive Conservative Party. If the hon. member can assure me that his party has changed its mind in this regard and that the Conservatives now have a new policy in this area, it would be very interesting to discuss this, and we could perhaps introduce a similar bill to the one which we put forward a few years ago to protect all Canadian borrowers.

[*English*]

**REQUEST THAT MINISTER INTERCEDE WITH BANKS AND CREDIT CARD COMPANIES**

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Madam Speaker, the minister may be aware that the banks, considering themselves under federal legislation, are ignoring the two provinces where consumer protection laws are in place. We need something much stronger. We need something from the federal point of view, which will apply to all Canadians. In the meantime will the minister intercede with the banks and credit card companies on behalf of many unwitting consumers across the country who have been nailed by high interest rates, and ask them to forestall interest charges on overdue accounts on the understanding that they will be paid in full within 30 days upon restoration of mail service in the country?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General):** Madam Speaker, I know that several of my colleagues are concerned about this issue. I shall certainly refer the suggestion made by the hon. member to the Minister of Finance, but I understand that the Minister responsible for Small Businesses and the Minister of State (Finance) have already examined the matter.

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[*English*]

**HEALTH AND WELFARE****CABINET CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORT UPON CHILDREN'S NEEDS**

**Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and I hope that the Minister of Justice will return for my supplementary question.

I assume that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has now had time to read the report of the health and welfare committee which was tabled last week, containing urgent recommendations for federal action on behalf of Canada's children. Particularly since the summer is upon us and we are fearful that this report will be buried, will the minister tell the House when this report will go to cabinet and what action she intends to take, personally, particularly with regard to establishing a children's bureau or secretariat that will advocate on behalf of Canada's children?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Madam Speaker, I am now examining the report which was tabled in the House of Commons only at the end of last week, and unfortunately, since the House is still sitting this week, we have had to cancel today a working meeting scheduled for this afternoon. It will take us a few weeks to put into practice the various recommendations, evaluate them, examine the costs, and so on, and it will not be possible to report to the House immediately.