

Statements by Ministers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY

TABLING OF 1985-86 ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister of External Relations): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 67(1), I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, the 1985-86 annual report of the Canadian International Development Agency.

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[English]

BANKS AND BANKING

ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL BANKING CENTRES—
MONTREAL AND VANCOUVER

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, in my Budget of last February I indicated that the Government was prepared to facilitate the establishment of international banking centres in Montreal and Vancouver.

[Translation]

At the time, I made it clear that this measure would reflect our desire to promote Canada's trade and economic interests in Europe and the Pacific Rim. I also indicated I would initiate talks with the banking community and the provinces with a view to pursuing this important objective.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform Hon. Members and the House that I intend to present a detailed Ways and Means motion for the purpose of facilitating the establishment of such international banking centres in Montreal and Vancouver.

[English]

In recent weeks and months there has been considerable comment arising out of our proposal, in both financial and political circles. Sadly, much of that commentary has had more to do with pure fiction than with cold, hard facts. So let me set the record straight.

The Government is proceeding with the necessary measures to allow the establishment of international banking centres in Montreal and Vancouver because we feel this very focused incentive will return to Canada some banking activities now being conducted abroad. These activities, which involve loans to and deposits by non-residents, now receive favourable tax treatment for certain transactions in such places as the Channel Islands and Panama. Our actions are aimed at attracting to Montreal business which now normally goes to the Channel Islands. Likewise, business which now originates in the Pacific Rim could move to Vancouver. In other words, we want to attract business that normally would not be conducted in Canada.

● (1500)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

INFLUX OF REFUGEES TO QUEBEC—REQUEST FOR
GOVERNMENT AID

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Minister for Immigration and Cultural Communities in Quebec, Mrs. Robic, on a number of occasions has asked the Minister responsible for special help to assist the Quebec Government which is facing an influx of refugees who have taxed to the limit the financial and human resources of that department. After having said that Ottawa was definitely not ready to make any commitment in that respect, is the Minister now in a position to say yes to Quebec?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have said upon receiving successive requests from the Quebec Minister that there were no specific funds in the federal treasury to cover such situations. Quite the opposite! We ourselves have to support extra costs as a Government. I simply said that if there was any leeway in our programs, I would be willing to evaluate them. At any rate, I will be meeting with the Quebec Minister in Montreal by the end of January, I think.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question. You will understand that since I have assumed new duties, I must try to find out to whom I should ask questions dealing with immigration.

Yesterday, the *Journal de Montréal* under the signature of Mrs. Monelle Saindon, reported that the Minister of State for Immigration had announced at the *Centre social d'aide aux immigrants* in Montreal that he would ask the federal Government to provide some assistance to non-profitable organizations and to the Quebec Government. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know who is the minister responsible for Immigration, either the minister to whom I am addressing my question or the Minister of State for Immigration, and are both ministers working together to have precisely the same view on the same issues and on the same commitments?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Immigration said yesterday, and I am repeating exactly his comments, that he would urge the federal Government to assist charitable organizations dealing with refugees in Quebec. The question asked by my colleague earlier was about some assistance to be provided to the Quebec Government. I think that the Hon. Member has nothing to fear. My colleague and I are constantly in contact with each other and I think that you now have before you the Minister for Immigration.