

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Broadbent:** The population has grown.

**Mr. Riis:** You are misleading the House. B.C. is getting hosed under this Conservative Government year after year.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Ask another question over there.

**Mr. Jelinek:** Keep it down, you guys.

I hope the New Democratic Party does not want the numbers up and dollars down in British Columbia. In terms of dollar value—

**Mr. Riis:** We want our fair share. We only want our fair share. All we are asking for is our fair share for once.

**Mr. Jelinek:** Why don't you let me answer the question?

**Mr. Riis:** Because you won't answer the question. You are afraid of the answer. You are afraid to go on the record.

• (1500)

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Jelinek:** I hope the Hon. Member will let me answer the question. The answer to the question is that for 20 years under the previous Government British Columbia did not get its fair share. It is only in the last two years that we are seeing the pay-off of the efforts of this Government over the past four years. That is why I am saying that the increase in procurement for British Columbia increased by 20 per cent in the last two years. We are still not satisfied, and that is why we elevated the DSS office in Vancouver to a Pacific directorate. The business community and Government of British Columbia applaud this initiative, so that our final objective on procurement is to bring equality of opportunity not only to British Columbia but to every region of the country.

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[Translation]

### SMALL BUSINESS

#### DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES AGAINST SMALL BUSINESSES— REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ISSUE DIRECTIVE

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister of State for Finance. Last week, the Canadian Bankers Association and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business met to settle the matter of the charges for bad cheques that banks levy on small businesses. At that meeting, there was no progress and no solution to this problem. Yesterday, the Minister gave the banks high marks and paid them compliments. I would like to know if it is government policy to have small business pay twice for NSF cheques. If not, when will the Government issue an order to stop this discriminatory practice that is unacceptable for small business?

[English]

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of State for Finance responded to that question in a very general and, indeed, in a specific way yesterday. There has been a great deal of compliance to date. Significant progress has been made with respect to service charges as they relate to small business. There are still discussions going on and further announcements will be made in due course.

#### GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou):** Mr. Speaker, why should small business be penalized for accepting what turns out to be a bad cheque from their customers? Why does the Government not take its responsibilities seriously, like it did for the consumer, and issue the same policy for small business? Isn't small business creating 80 per cent of the jobs? That is why the Minister of State for Small Businesses is travelling around the country announcing his empty Institute of Entrepreneurship. Why not do something concrete and help small business to be relieved of this unjustified charge?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting that in an offhand way the Hon. Member has applauded the Government for its efforts towards improving the climate for small business. That is precisely why 80 per cent of the new jobs have been created by the small business sector. That is part and parcel of the economic policies of this Government which set out in the first place to scale down the regulatory burden and make the climate more attractive for the small business community.

Indeed, as I indicated in my earlier answer, there are ongoing discussions, but significant progress has been made with regard to service charges. As I indicated, discussions are ongoing and there will be further announcements in the future.

It all goes without saying that the small business community is very satisfied with the policies of this Government, and that is reflected in the massive job opportunities which have been created by it.

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### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### ZIMBABWE—DETENTION OF CANADIAN CITIZEN

**Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Last December I asked about Canadian citizen Dick Laban who had been held in a Zimbabwe jail for several months. To date there has been no trial and there are still no charges outstanding, yet Mr. Laban is still in jail.