

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to congratulate the hon. member on her appointment as opposition critic of relevant matters in my department. I wish her luck in her new duties.

I also want to assure her that, like her, several hon. members on this side of the House are eager for that committee to be reconstituted without delay; I hope it can be convened next week.

[English]

Mrs. Pigott: In light of the announced austerity in government spending, can the minister explain why tenders are being called on October 31 by the National Capital Commission for construction of the eastern driveway recreational road, changing the historic pattern that recreational land is for people, not cars? What measures are being initiated to improve accountability and consultative planning in the NCC?

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I shall have to check on the matter with the National Capital Commission after which I shall give an answer to the hon. member as soon as possible.

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FINANCE

MEASURES GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE TO STOP EXODUS OF INDUSTRIES TO UNITED STATES

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put my question to the Minister of Finance. As New York bankers have already amassed an industrial fund of over \$500 million to attract Canadian industries interested in moving to the United States, and more specifically to the New England states, can the Minister of Finance tell the House what measures his department intends to take to counteract that initiative on the part of American banks which are now courting Canadian industries, in particular in our area which Canadian industries have been leaving recently to move to the New England states? Does his department intend to do something to prevent an exodus of Canadian industries?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I fail to see how the government could intervene when people decide to invest money in Canada as well as in the United States. Every day we try to talk American entrepreneurs into making investments in Canada. It is also very normal for the Americans to do the same with Canadians occasionally. I therefore do not see how we could intervene. However, if the hon. member has suggestions to make, I am willing to consider them.

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that in the United States Canadian industrialists are being offered some of our money to finance the manufacturing of machinery, does his department intend to use the same methods or to propose equally attractive solutions for the Canadian industry?

[Mrs. Pigott.]

Mr. Chrétien: Well, at the present time many Quebec businessmen are worried by the situation in Quebec and unfortunately there is nothing I can do about it. I think that many times their projects of diversifying their investments and maybe transferring some of their assets to the U.S. can be explained by the fact that there is political instability in Quebec. The best way to solve that problem would probably be for the hon. member to give his unqualified support to the Quebec federalists who want to get rid of the separatists.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH FRENCH COMMONWEALTH—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Supply and Services who has reportedly just returned from Africa with a recommendation to form a French Commonwealth. With the Prime Minister not particularly supportive of the existing Commonwealth, does the government intend to seriously consider a permanent Commonwealth of this nature?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I believe on the contrary that the right hon. Prime Minister has become the senior politician of the Commonwealth and that he is highly respected by heads of governments. It is precisely because Canada is fortunate to have a politician of such high caliber as its leader that we would like to profit from his experience and his competence so that this country may project abroad the image of what it actually is, namely a bilingual and multicultural country.

[English]

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, obviously age does not really predicate involvement or interest. However, in this question, obviously the cooperation of France will be required, a country that has welcomed Mr. René Lévesque. Has the government made any overtures in this regard?

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, I think that Canada must assume its own responsibilities and first protect its own best interests. France is certainly a very important partner in the French-speaking world and we will obviously have to hold negotiations with the French government.

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[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES AUTO PACT—MEASURES TO AID AUTO PARTS INDUSTRY

Hon. Martin O'Connell (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Com-