

Routine Proceedings

While I commend the Minister's tribute to the International Red Cross, and agree that there should be a strong humanitarian gesture, we must also be conscious that we are not simply building a bigger band-aid while cutting funds for real development work that will bring long-term solutions to poverty and suffering. That is exactly what the Government of Canada is doing in its most recent Budget. It has cut funds for overseas development assistance while maintaining constant funds for the type of work done by the International Red Cross.

While I celebrate International Red Cross Day, it is with real sadness because the Government of Canada has reneged on its promise to try to contribute to solving the world's problems in development work. It is only contributing to building a bigger band-aid.

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PLANT BREEDERS' RIGHTS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-15, an Act respecting plant breeders' rights.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall the Hon. Minister have leave to introduce the said Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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INTEREST ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-238, an Act to amend the Interest Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall the Hon. Member have leave to introduce the said Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, this Bill is one that I believe is required to deal with the problem with the way interest is calculated by companies selling goods on

credit by credit cards. Some companies charge interest, even though there has been partial payment, right back to the date of the purchase of the goods when sending out their invoice for the next period to the holders of the cards. Others just charge back to the original billing date.

This Bill requires all companies to charge only from the billing date and only charge interest on a monthly basis, not on a daily interest basis. The current system of interest charges is, in my view, totally unfair to the consumer. This amendment to the Interest Act is necessary.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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PETITIONS

BANK SERVICE CHARGES

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by several people living in the Ottawa area who want to bring to the attention of the Government the fact that bank service charges have been increasing at an average of 19 per cent per year, which is five times the rate of inflation. They argue that voluntary agreements and industry self-regulation have a poor record of success among Canadian corporations. They call upon the Parliament of Canada to pass legislation that would regulate and control bank service charges and provide consumer protection to banking Canadians.

FUNDING FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of a number of Canadians who show that 41 per cent of social assistance recipients in Ontario are children. This percentage is higher in other provinces in Canada.

They point out that in all regions of Canada social assistance recipients live well below the poverty line as defined by Statistics Canada. They are asking Parliament to consider the advisability of increasing funding for social programs that are delivered by the federal Government, transferring payments for programs delivered by the provinces, and working with the provinces to raise social assistance rates to at least the poverty line.