

Oral Questions

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, only this government would have the nerve to call a 42 per cent decrease in retail sales a sign of economic recovery.

My question is again for the Prime Minister. So far this year bankruptcies are up over 63 per cent. With the news of a one-half billion dollar decrease in retail sales between January and February, there should be no question that those bankruptcies will continue to rise unabated through spring and summer.

Since the Prime Minister and the government refuse to stop this assault on the economy, will they at least give some relief to the casualties by introducing in this House today reformed bankruptcy legislation to offer some protection to those Canadian businesses that are suffering so badly?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friends is very well aware of the considerable work that my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, has been doing in bringing about the introduction of the bankruptcy legislation. I would hope at some stage in the fairly near future he will be able to do so.

* * *

DECENTRALIZATION

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

I am encouraged with the logical relocation of the National Energy Board to Calgary. I am also encouraged by this government's quick action to fill the void in Summerside and similarly in Portage la Prairie.

Coming from Regina, I have seen not only a comparative lack of federal presence in the capital city but have also experienced the ravaging of federal jobs under a previous government, the majority of these jobs going east of our province.

The Conference Board of Canada states that Saskatchewan's economy contributes 3.7 per cent to Canada's Gross National Product, while the federal government spends only 0.8 per cent of its budget in Saskatchewan.

Can the Prime Minister give my community this government's assurances that the government intends to continue with a policy of logical decentralization?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Regina for a very important question.

In point of fact there is general recognition that the decision of the government to locate the Western Diversification Office in Edmonton has resulted, for example, by bringing the decision-making process closer to western Canada in the creation of some 26,700 new jobs in western Canada.

The decision by the government, for example, to locate the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency in Moncton has been described by Premier Frank McKenna as the most important contribution to regional development in the history of Confederation.

We believe that there is an important role for decentralization in Canada. Obviously the case made with such eloquence by the member from Regina would undoubtedly cause the government to examine Regina very carefully as a sight for any future moves of decision-making bodies west.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the the Minister of National Health and Welfare. He is finally sufficiently concerned enough for the safety of Canadian women to send an official to Washington to check out the recent U.S. Food and Drug Administration report on the carcinogenic threat of the Meme breast implant to women in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is putting a question which is clearly of very great importance to all hon. members in the House, and I would ask hon. members to listen to her question carefully.

Ms. Langan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister now willing to suspend the use of the Meme until he has a definitive report? He should be willing to err on the side of Canadian women rather than on the side of manufacturers of implants.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will be aware that yesterday she rose in the House of Commons based on a clipping from a newspaper and demanded that we withdraw the implant. My response to her was to request, if she had not yet seen the report, to wait until we have had a chance to look at the report and to analyse