

Oral Question

I want to ask the minister again: What is the government going to do about this deplorable situation at Montreal?

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, the member from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce goes through the same routine every Friday. He gets up and puts forward a list of jobs that would have been lost when in fact there are thousands of jobs that have been created on the Island of Montreal and in the Montreal area since this government has been in power.

The unemployment rate has been down not only across the country but also in the Montreal area and the province of Quebec. One of the reasons why unemployment is down in Montreal is that this government, for example, put forward Bill C-22, a bill his party obstructed. This created thousands of jobs on the Island of Montreal. Why did the Liberals do that?

Another good example is the space agency that went into Montreal. There are numerous measures that this government put forward, and the best answer I can give to this House is that if they want to compare their record of 1980 to 1984 to our record from 1984 to today, I think the answer will be very clear for all the people of Montreal and of Canada.

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• (1140)

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank. He will know that yesterday loans out to strip joints and topless bars and so on had reached \$3 million. By this morning another \$600,000 has been uncovered. It is going up like a fund-raising chart by the day.

He will be aware of the rage that is growing across the country from the small business community and people like the hon. member from Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia who has joined with the chairman of the finance committee to condemn the government for failing to act and failing to monitor adequately to ensure that loans in the millions of dollars were not being made to strip joints and the like.

Recognizing just how outraged Canadians are as they learn more about this situation, will the minister indicate

that indeed an investigation is being conducted and that he will report to the House the extent of the loans that have been made to these kinds of business operations?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would hope the hon. member would agree with me it is appropriate that immediately upon becoming aware of this situation, even the one case, it brought about that policy change. The fact that there was more than one case is in a sense immaterial. There should not even be one. We have introduced the policy. I hope he would have the grace to admit that was the appropriate action to take.

I hope he would also have the grace to admit that I have asked the president to ascertain whether in fact any of the loans in question occurred as a result of flagrant disregard for what had been the policy all along, since 1944 I am informed, of not funding these kinds of organizations and how that occurred. If it occurred through administrative error, he is to ensure me through whatever legal advice is necessary that in fact the existing policy will prevent that from happening in the future.

As I indicated earlier to questions from other members, we are looking into the files. We know they go back as far as 1972. It did not start in 1984.

This minister has not looked into a single loan of the FBDB. I have not authorized a single loan. It is a Crown corporation, one of those government run organizations the NDP likes to see in operation. It operated at arm's length. It made decisions contrary to government policy. Remedial action is being taken.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, today we found out more about loans from the Federal Business Development Bank to clubs which exploit and degrade women. These loans bring the total so far to \$3.5 million of taxpayers' money used for these clubs.

At the same time this government has cut \$2 million for the funding of women's organizations, despite intensive lobbying by both the government's own status of women department and women's groups across the country. The FBDB has refused to set up a special fund for women entrepreneurs.

When will the government redress the balance between the millions of dollars given to businesses that degrade and exploit women and the millions cut from