

Oral Questions

We have been awaiting with trepidation all week the charge of the rodent brigade. I will pass this request from the hon. gentleman to the Solicitor General who will, I am sure, next week around budget day, respond to him.

CONTENTS OF REPORT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, with friends like Premier Hatfield, who needs enemies?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nunziata: On May 3 the Solicitor General promised that the report would be comprehensive. Would the Minister of Justice therefore confirm that the report will reveal if there is any substance to the allegations made by Premier Hatfield that the RCMP was part of a conspiracy to overthrow his Government? Will the report detail full particulars of the secret meeting at the Chateau Laurier held on October 7 between the Solicitor General and Premier Hatfield? Will the report indicate precisely why the RCMP waited 30 days before they charged Premier Hatfield, or will the report be nothing but a fraud, a sham, and a deceit?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, for the first time, words fail me.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): But not for long.

Mr. Crosbie: I think it is for the first time. The Commissioner of the RCMP is preparing this report, and I think that if there is one thing of which this House can be assured, it is his complete integrity and impartiality.

The report will deal with the RCMP investigation, whether or not there was a leak that could be traced in any way to the RCMP, and the issues into which the Commissioner was asked to look. I am sure that if the Solicitor General feels that it is in the public interest to reveal the report, it will put the decisive lie to the various allegations and suggestions so improperly contained in the hon. gentleman's question.

* * *

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

CREDIT CARD INTEREST RATES

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs I direct my question to the Minister of State for Finance. We are all happy with the decline in interest rates. Can the Minister tell the House why interest rates on charge cards such as Visa and Mastercard, which rose dramatically when interest rates were at 20 per cent or more, remain today at 18.6 per cent, as they have remained for the past year, at a time when the prime rate of 10.75 per cent is the lowest it has been since September, 1978? What action, if any, is the

Government planning to take to ensure that these rates come down as have other interest rates?

● (1150)

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the best thing that the Government can do for consumers and for interest rates is to ensure that we get our own house in order so that rates can come down, and that is happening in the market-place now. Consumer rates, I am sure, will follow other rates down. The Hon. Member himself has indicated that they are lower than they were. I should think consumers would be happy.

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, what I am asking the Government to do is to try a little persuasion or pressure. The Government supposedly believes that the market will do these things. Since the Minister knows that there are only two charge card companies in Canada, Visa and Master Card, and that they set the terms and conditions for all agencies which issue their cards, can the Minister tell the House when the Government intends to ensure that these terms and conditions permit genuine price competition and, therefore, lower interest rates, which we should have now on these cards?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Hon. Member will be happy to facilitate discussion and legislation around my financial institutions proposals, and that will help us get more competition in the market.

Mr. Orlikow: Don't hold your breath for that.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On April 23, 24, and 25, during the heat of the Lawson-Murray-Wilson family affair, the Prime Minister promised this House that the new—n-e-w—conflict of interest guidelines respecting the conduct and behaviour of Cabinet Ministers would be filed in the House within a few days. Nearly one month has passed since the Prime Minister made that commitment. Will the Acting Prime Minister provide Hon. Members of Parliament, and through Hon. Members of Parliament, all Canadians, with a copy of those new conflict of interest guidelines respecting the behaviour and conduct of members of Cabinet?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, the rodent has it wrong again. The Prime Minister indicated that the Deputy Prime Minister was seized of the report prepared by the Sharp-Starr Commission and was