

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give my hon. friend the assurance that the amendments will be before the House by that time, although they are being worked out at present and will be brought forward as quickly as possible. As my hon. friend knows, they are part of the program for this session.

Mr. Knowles: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will they at least be on the Order Paper within the next few weeks?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I am rather shy about giving my hon. friend a deadline. I do not intend to respond to the temptations with which he beguiled me last session.

PRIVILEGE

MR. CAOUCETTE—REPLY TO QUESTION ON ORDER PAPER

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, it is not so much a question I want to direct to a minister at this time as a question of privilege I want to raise with regard to the answer or answers which I received to question No. 117.

I asked how many loans were granted under the Small Businesses Loans Act in Canada, in the province of Quebec and in Villeneuve county; what is the average amount of the loans granted at the three levels; in what municipalities in Villeneuve county were such loans made and what was the amount of each; on what criteria is acceptance or refusal of such loans determined, because this is a federal act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as an answer I am told that by December 31, 1964, 11,215 loans had been extended throughout Canada. It is the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance who answered me. In the province of Quebec, 2,932 loans were granted, and the figures are not available for Villeneuve county. Why is the information not available? It is because no loan was granted and the parliamentary secretary is afraid to say so. The answer to question No. 2 is that the average loan was \$9,013 for Canada, \$10,598 for the province of Quebec, and figures are not available for Villeneuve county.

I see that the parliamentary secretary is now in his seat. He is aware that nothing was granted in Villeneuve county. That is why those figures are not available.

The answer to question No. 3—it is not a question, but rather a question of privilege—

is that the total amount of loans granted for Canada was \$101,083,427, for Quebec it was \$31,072,419, and the information is not available for Villeneuve county.

The answer to question No. 4 is that the information is not available for Villeneuve county.

But what is more disturbing, and this is the main reason for my question of privilege, is my question No. 5, I asked on what criteria is acceptance or refusal of such loans determined. To that question I put to the government, the answer I get from the ministry is that loans granted under the Small Businesses Loans Act are made by the chartered banks of Canada; not by the government or the administration; no, it is the chartered banks which decide if loans are to be granted to people who need them to maintain or build up their business.

Under the act a bank employee must examine—and that is the theory of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance—the applications for loans guaranteed by the government with as much care as the bank requires from him in the conduct of its ordinary operations.

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Villeneuve is seeking to debate a reply to a written question. I respectfully submit that on orders of the day it is not in order to carry on such a debate, and the hon. Member's remarks cannot be brought in order merely by asserting that the debate involves a question of privilege.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. After this long explanation or critique of the answer it did seem to the Chair that the point of privilege would be that the answer was deliberately wrong, but that allegation has not been made. I must agree with the President of the Privy Council that just to continue on orders of the day a long explanation and discussion of the answer is not in order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the President of the Privy Council, I want to say this. When we put a