

trusteeship, pending an appropriate and urgently needed inquiry?

● (1450)

[English]

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the primary interest of the Government is to ensure that the financial situation is cleared up. The Hon. Member may want to make his representation with regard to personnel directly to the Minister.

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CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

DECISION ORDERING REIMBURSEMENT OF BELL CANADA SUBSCRIBERS—THREAT OF APPEAL

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Communications I will direct my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Bell Canada has threatened to retaliate against consumers, its own telephone subscribers, as a result of the CRTC decision. Will the Minister tell us what action the Government will take to protect consumers if Bell Canada follows through with this threat?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that question most probably should be directed to the Minister of Communications who is responsible for the CRTC which, in turn, is responsible to ensure that consumers of telephone services are protected from any such action.

TELEPHONE CHARGE ROLLBACKS

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I will direct a supplementary question to the same Minister who does have responsibility for consumer affairs. Will the Government at least undertake not to cancel the rollbacks in telephone charges which the CRTC announced, irrespective of whether Bell Canada appeals to the courts? Will the Government at least undertake that it will not cancel the decision made by the CRTC on Tuesday?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I hope the Hon. Member will allow due process to proceed. It would be most improper to decide the matter in advance of an appeal to the courts. That would be to say, in effect, that we do not care what the courts do with this appeal, that we will make our judgment regardless. I do not think that would be responsible on our part. I can assure you that I share concerns for consumers which are at least as genuine as those of the Hon. Member.

Oral Questions

BANKS AND BANKING

TAKEOVER OF CONTINENTAL BANK

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance and concerns the takeover of the Continental Bank by British-owned Lloyd's Bank by a method which avoided the need for parliamentary approval. Since the Government was involved in all the negotiations will the Minister tell the House if he advised the bank to bypass Parliament?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, we all know that Lloyd's is a world-class bank. It has substantial resources and has the intention to pay off the Bank of Canada. All of this was very good news for the people of Canada. I will be explaining, as much as I can, the point of view of the Government in the committee which will be reviewing this issue in a couple of weeks.

REPAYMENT OF BANK OF CANADA ADVANCES

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, although the purchase agreement calls for repayment in full of Bank of Canada advances of \$2.5 billion on the closing date, October 31, a bank spokesman has said that in fact paper will be issued on October 31 to pay off the amount in the next few months. Did the Minister approve this arrangement?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the fashion in which the line of credit with the Bank of Canada will be paid back is subject to negotiation. It will be decided in the next few weeks.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

EMPLOYMENT OF FRANCOPHONES

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board. There is a report in the press today that the Government has approved the lowering of the percentage of Francophones for the RCMP. Is that allegation correct?

[Translation]

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I just want to inform the House that today's newspaper reports do not in any way reflect a Government decision. Apparently, there was some discussion on the subject among officials, but the circular issued by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police certainly did not have the approval of Treasury Board.