

EXTERNAL AID

AFRICAN FAMINE RELIEF PROGRAM

Mr. Don Ravis (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister for External Relations. In light of her recent trip to Africa and the excellent results obtained on behalf of contributors to African relief, can the Minister assure the House and all Canadians that the vital relief carried out by the famine relief program will be maintained until such time as concrete recovery is in place?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, Mr. David MacDonald should present his report to me on March 31, which report should contain recommendations to guarantee that the Canadian Government will provide assistance and take action so that such a tragedy will not happen again.

This report will have been the fruit of many consultations between Canada and the African states. We are looking for answers, ideas and advice. I shall therefore examine this report carefully in co-operation with the parliamentary and departmental sub-committees, and I trust that we shall be able to develop a policy enabling Canada to take effective action when we want to provide assistance to those who need it.

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[English]

INSURANCE

EFFECT OF INCREASED PREMIUMS

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Finance. The insurance critic for the Consumers' Association of Canada said: "They will pay more for insurance, they will pay more for products, they will pay more for services, they will pay more in property tax. In the end, the individual pays it all". Can the Minister assure us that the consumers of Canada will not have to pay for his mismanagement of the insurance industry?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have gone over this particular issue in the House before. I think the Hon. Member should understand that this is not just a Canadian problem. It is an international problem because of the major accidents that have taken place, including the air accidents last year and some of the shipping accidents, as well as the general world-wide trend to larger settlements.

My colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, is meeting with the industry and some of her provincial colleagues in order to address this problem. As I have said before, this problem must be balanced between the provincial responsibility for premiums and contract law, and the federal responsibility for solvency and capital adequacy. That is the approach we are taking.

Petitions

LIABILITY COVERAGE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, we all know that insurance companies make a good profit on property insurance. Will the Minister meet with the insurance industry and ask it to provide liability insurance to small businesses as a short-term solution until the Government finds a long-term solution?

• (1500)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I believe the Hon. Member is asking the federal Government to step in and order the insurance companies to do something that falls within provincial jurisdiction. For that reason I say to the Hon. Member that I will bring his concerns to the attention of my colleague, the Minister of State for Finance, and possibly she will raise that point with her provincial colleagues.

Mr. Speaker: One question, the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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AIR CANADA

REMOVAL OF OPERATIONS FROM GANDER TO ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. In light of the fact that Air Canada has announced that it intends to move its operations from Gander to St. John's, will he assure the House and the people of Gander that no decision will be made to move Air Canada from Gander until he has checked all the necessary information?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, of course I will undertake to check all of the available and pertinent facts. I had the privilege of meeting with representatives of Gander yesterday, including the Mayor and other interested representatives from that community. I intend to consult further with parties. I am sure the Hon. Member knows that the request was made by Air Canada to make the transfer and it was based on a commercial decision.

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CLERK OF PETITIONS' REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions, with the exception of three, presented by Hon. Members on Wednesday, January 22, 1986, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

Petitions presented by the Hon. Members for Abitibi (Mr. St-Julien) and Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) do not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.