

Oral Questions

than expenses but, now it is in power, has decided instead to raise those contributions?

Hon. André Bissonnette (Minister of State (Small Businesses)): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my hon. colleague for Saint-Léonard-Anjou on his appointment. I find his question very interesting. This matter is now under consideration and I shall probably be able to provide an answer personally to the Hon. Member for Saint-Léonard-Anjou within a few days.

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, can the Hon. Minister tell us what his plan of action is to restore the confidence of small business in this two-faced Government?

[Translation]

Hon. André Bissonnette (Minister of State (Small Businesses)): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I did not understand the question. If the Hon. Member could repeat it either in French or in English, I shall be happy to answer it, but I did not understand him the first time.

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PUBLIC WORKS

OLD PORT OF QUEBEC

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Public Works.

Could my hon. colleague advise the House why he has hired an accounting firm to investigate the administration of the Vieux-Port de Québec? Has the accounting firm already started its investigation and when does the minister expect to table its findings in the House?

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Member for his concern over the interests of Quebec City's Old Port. Why this investigation? You will recall that a great deal has been written about Quebec City's Old Port, and that major cost overruns have been incurred in conjunction with the projects that have been carried out in the Old Port of Quebec.

Under these circumstances and in view of the comments we had received from various quarters, I suggest that a full assessment of the administration of these projects was urgently required in the public interest, and so I ordered one made and I have so decided; I hope I can table within the next few months a full investigation report, so that the general public may find out why and how public funds were spent.

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

PROVISION OF JOB-CREATION FUNDS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment. I am sure she shares my dismay that some senior business executives said on *The Journal* last night that the Government's confidence building program will not create many jobs for at least one year. In light of the fact that the Minister confirmed in committee yesterday that the \$1 billion which has been allocated for creating jobs will not, in her words, be made up of any new money whatsoever, could the Minister go to the Prime Minister and to the Cabinet to see whether or not they will allocate several billion dollars to create jobs in the immediate term?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will know that since I came into office, a short period of just over two months, we have allocated \$430 million for direct job creation this winter. That means some 70,000 jobs are to be created. We have also re-allocated \$1 billion from other programs to job creation and new job opportunities. I would think that the allocation of \$1.5 billion toward job creation, new job opportunities and human resource development, in just over two months is really a pretty good record.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

EMPLOYMENT OF EXTRA STAFF BY UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, in committee yesterday the Minister said:

—I suppose one would say none of it was new money—

In light of that, I wonder if she could tell the House that, instead of spending some \$30 million on the 700-person force designed to persecute people on unemployment insurance, she will now spend that \$30 million trying to create jobs for people.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, obviously the Hon. Member's question indicates that there is a very fundamental difference between members of the Conservative Party and members of the New Democratic Party. There is a very fundamental difference between the two.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the Minister would like to finish her answer.

Miss MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The money to which I have referred is not new money in the sense that we have not dipped into the pockets of the taxpayers, as members of the NDP might wish to do. Equally important, the money that will be allocated to intensive interviews will be used to