

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 9, 1986

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour to table in both official languages the response of the Government to the following 14 petitions: 331-469, 331-479, 331-565 to 331-574 inclusive, 331-583 and 331-586.

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[English]

QUESTION ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 558.

[Text]

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO SINGLE INDUSTRY COMMUNITIES

Question No. 558—**Mr. Parry:**

1. Were criteria established for federal assistance and tax relief for workers affected by plant closures in single industry communities and, if so (a) on what date (b) what are they (c) how were they implemented?

2. Were workers in Ear Falls, Ontario, denied such a tax relief and, if so, will the government table (a) the documentation leading up to the decision (b) departmental opinions in favour and against this decision and, if not, for what reason?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): The criteria for tax relief on severance payments were established prior to the November, 1984 Economic Statement. They are: (i) the permanent closure of the primary employer in a single industry remote location; (ii) significant job loss in the area; (iii) a high regional unemployment rate; (iv) significant distance from any buoyant labour market; and (v) a broadly based settlement package.

As the criteria make clear, the measure providing tax assistance on severance payments is intended only for those exceptional situations where the cessation of operations of the principal employer effectively results in a town closure for lack

of a viable economic base. This is clearly not the case with Ear Falls. The Minister of Finance has met with the Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River to discuss this issue and has given him a copy of the criteria.

All applications for tax relief on severance payments are evaluated using these criteria. The Griffith situation was also assessed. Tax relief was denied because it does not fall within the intent of the measure.

The Minister of Finance has discussed the Ear Falls case with the Hon. Member and has indicated that he is prepared to carefully consider any additional points the Hon. Member wishes to raise. This is clearly indicative of the Government's interest and responsiveness in this matter.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The question as enumerated by the Parliamentary Secretary has been answered.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 522 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 522 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[Text]

GRANTS TO MAKE BUILDINGS ACCESSIBLE FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Question No. 522—**Mrs. Browes:**

1. Since 1980, what amount did the Government spend, either directly or through grants to companies, for modifications to make private and public buildings accessible for disabled persons?

2. Since the inception of the job strategy program, what amount was spent or allocated through grants to make private and public buildings accessible to disabled persons?