

*Oral Questions*

was \$1.2 million, I was referring to the total cost. Consultants' fees and private studies carried out over a period of almost two years during which the study was made, amounted to \$700,000, and this, with the estimated cost of the work of departmental employees who worked on the special team, added up to \$1.2 million.

[English]

**Mr. Huntington:** Madam Speaker, it is obvious to those of us on this side of the House who know something about the subject matter that the minister is not addressing, nor is he aware of, any of the real gut issues which face this important community which relies on him in its interface with the government.

CREDIT CO-INSURANCE PROGRAM—QUERY RESPECTING  
INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

**Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano):** Madam Speaker, the overview speaks positively about the credit co-insurance program, which has been in the Ottawa works for about three years or more. The agreement for the first broker under this program was signed on February 10, 1982. Essential to the implementation of this program, which will be a valuable aid to the long-term financial needs of the business sector, are amendments to the Canadian and British Insurance Companies Act and amendments to the Pension Benefits Standards Act. Why have these amendments not been brought forward so that this new vehicle of financial assistance will finally be able to operate?

[Translation]

**Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member said only one firm was authorized to provide reinsurance. I think he should check his facts, since as far as I know, there are five firms who are allowed to operate in this field at the present time. I have taken note of the two suggestions made by the hon. member.

[English]

**Mr. Huntington:** Madam Speaker, the minister obviously does not know what is going on in his own department. There is only one broker who has been licensed, and that agreement was on February 10. There are others making applications and taking positions in the marketplace, but they have not been licensed, nor is the legislation in place. I am asking the minister to make sure the legislation is put into place so that that need in the financial markets can be served.

BUSINESS BANKRUPTCIES

**Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano):** Madam Speaker, the FASCYM report says:

Day to day operating problems far outweigh financing in importance—

Can the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism explain why 300 small businesses per month in the Toronto area alone are closing their doors, why thousands of independent stores cannot pay their bills and are closing their doors, why bankruptcies are accelerating at depression rates, and why transportation companies are closing or going into receivership?

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

[Translation]

**Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member does not seem to realize that we are going through an extremely difficult period. Until our economy, with the co-operation of all economic agents including business, consumers, governments and unions, is able to control inflation which at the present time is causing a drop in consumer demand, which in turn is the main cause of the bankruptcies that are taking place right now, until we have dealt with the very basic problem of inflation in our economy, Madam Speaker, I do not think we can expect to see any rapid improvement.

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● (1420)

[English]

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

FORTHCOMING STATEMENT BY MINISTER

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The minister has announced that at eight o'clock this evening he will make a statement on motions. I think he will understand that this is only the second time in this Parliament that a minister has made a statement on motions, the first being when the Minister of Finance announced very, very extensive changes to his budget last December 18. Will the minister's statement tonight on his energy policy continue in the tradition established by the Minister of Finance?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member will have to wait until eight o'clock. I may remind him that the National Energy Program has been adjusted regularly since October 1980. A number of adjustments were made when an agreement was signed with the three oil-producing provinces. Further changes representing, in all, about \$900 million in additional income for the industry were made since last September, and I am referring to the \$900 million spread over the period from 1981 to 1986. My hon. colleague will have to make up his own mind this evening, but I want to make it clear that we have made regular adjustments as the situation has developed.