

S.O. 21

Mr. Speaker, Quebecers want to know why the price can be reasonable in the United States, in Boston, but not in Montreal.

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[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

CREDIT CARD INTEREST RATE INCREASES

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, when consumers who use MasterCard issued by Royal Trust receive their April 28 bills, it is reported they will find their interest charges increased a full three-quarters of a percentage point. It is reported on May 1 the charges on Visa cards issued by the Royal Bank of Canada will rise to 18.6 per cent—this at a time when not only Canada, but the United States, France, and Japan have cut their interest rates.

If these companies have a good explanation for raising interest charges now when bank and prime rates are falling, let them tell Parliament and the people the reason for that. When the cost of institutional money is coming down why is the cost of consumer credit going up? When inflation has stabilized, why do credit costs have to soar?

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INSURANCE

LIABILITY COVERAGE—INCREASED PREMIUMS

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, liability insurance is not a luxury, it is a necessity, and yet municipalities, businesses, and individuals, after carrying liability insurance for years, are now "taking a chance" because of the ridiculously exorbitant premiums.

One reason is the trend in Canada toward the high court judgments in the U.S.A., like the one awarded a thief for several thousand dollars when he broke his back committing a felony. Another is the greed of the overseas reinsurers who have made plenty through the years and are now insisting on sky-high premiums. The Canadian insurance industry, including the local agents, is caught in the squeeze.

I know the law of Tort places this matter under provincial jurisdiction, but it is so essential that I believe the federal Government can show leadership by co-ordinating the provincial efforts to provide liability insurance at sensible prices and to endeavour to secure more Canadian owned reinsurers.

• (1415)

THE ECONOMY

FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM RESULTS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, the last two speakers have given good examples of what happens to people in a capitalist free enterprise Conservative system. Perhaps the people of Canada should understand that what is happening to them, with respect to high interest charges and the problems about which the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) spoke, could be changed if only they understood what the Conservative Party really stands for.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—FORTHCOMING U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE VOTE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister I would like to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. It arises out of the U.S. Senate vote tomorrow on the free trade issue.

An Hon. Member: Here he is.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I will then direct my question to the Prime Minister. It seems quite clear that the American administration is negotiating feverishly with key Members of the U.S. Senate prior to the vote tomorrow, if it takes place, on the free trade issue between Canada and the United States. Has the Prime Minister been on the telephone recently with the President of the United States about this issue? What concessions is the U.S. administration planning in order to entice those Senators to vote in favour of the fast track? And would the Prime Minister be good enough to inform the House what those concessions might be?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): There have been no conversations, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): There have been no conversations with the President.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER MEET PREMIERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): I will change the subject. There have been no conversations between the President of the United States and our Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister be having conversations with his provincial counterparts to establish their position in the talks? Last week, he attacked the provincial premiers on the subject of trade barriers. Does he intend to meet his