

Oral Questions

He failed to address the question, that is, that Canada Post is hiring casual employees and making it a condition of employment that they be prepared to cross a picket line. Does that not appear to him to be provocative action rather than action which leads to agreement? Will he not take action so that the postal service can be maintained and we have good labour relations in the Post Office?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am quite certain that good labour relations in the Post Office are not contributed to by involvement in the House in the negotiations and the issues. I know that the Post Office, like every other appropriate corporation, is bound by the Canada Labour Code and must follow it in all its dealings. I would assume that whatever it is doing—and the Hon. Member talks about some press report—it is obeying the law. I would expect it to obey the law. If there is some evidence that it is not obeying the law, I would appreciate knowing about it, and I will see that it does.

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[Translation]

INDUSTRY**DEVELOPMENT OF MONTREAL EAST—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Finance follows that raised by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri—Westmount. Next Monday in Montreal Members of Parliament and their provincial counterparts, as well as municipal councillors representing the Montreal East area, will meet with Montreal's new mayor to discuss the development of that region. The Minister is well aware that his Government has set up many committees, including the Picard Committee, the de Cotret Committee and the Pichette Committee. So far, nothing has happened. Could the Minister tell us before Monday's meeting, whether the Government together with the provincial government and the City of Montreal is prepared to grant fiscal benefits to make Montreal East into a designated or business area? Is the Government going to do its share to help Montreal East economy recover and create new jobs?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member is quite well aware, the President of the Treasury Board is the chairman of a committee which has been doing a considerable amount of work in reviewing various proposals. When those proposals are ready, they will be coming forward, and we will be able to make a decision based upon the facts at that time.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATE FINANCIALLY IN ESTABLISHING NEW ENTERPRISES

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montréal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. It is true that the President of Treasury Board has spent much effort, gone through a lot of paperwork, been involved in many discussions, organized many panels, done a lot of on-the-spot running, with no concrete proposals to put forward. Only ten employees out of 650 are reported to be working at the Hearst plant. At the Bombardier plant, they do not know whether in three months from now they will have work for the 650 employees. Would the Minister accept a concrete proposal from the Quebec Government and the City of Montreal to participate financially in establishing new businesses through tax shelters granted to a designated area. Yes or no?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of Treasury Board): As my friend the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie has just indicated, Mr. Speaker, we have indeed done a lot of work, carried out many studies and consultations. But above all we have created jobs.

An Hon. Member: Where?

Mr. de Cotret: We have, above all, made considerable investments in the Montreal area. Mr. Speaker, in Quebec we have created 175,000 jobs. In the Montreal area, thousands of jobs were created over the past year. In Montreal East, significant financial help has been provided. As I indicated to all the spokesmen for the area Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is there to support financially all new business ventures which could create permanent jobs in Montreal East, Montreal West, Downtown Montreal, as well as in the area represented by the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri—Westmount: our money and jobs are there to prove it.

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[English]

FINANCE**CREDIT CARD INTEREST RATES**

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance. The bank rate has fallen again. This time it is down 9 bases points.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stackhouse: Major credit card institutions and department stores are defying low interest rates, a parliamentary report, and public opinion by keeping their rates at excessive levels. What action is the Minister ready to take to remind these institutions and stores that there is such a thing as good corporate citizenship?