

[English]

**Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Madam Speaker, I say to the minister, ask the consumers who are checking out at supermarket counters if the prices they are paying are a distortion. The minister can ask them what they think about the increase in the cost of living under this Liberal government. In 1972, when the Liberal government was faced with rapidly rising food prices, it introduced a consumer subsidy on milk and bread. The government responded then. If the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is really sincere in protecting the consumer, how will he help Canadians, especially those on fixed incomes, cope with 1980-style cost of food?

[Translation]

**Mr. Ouellet:** Madam Speaker, it is obvious that periodically the Canadian government announces programs designed to help Canadian consumers. I think that the budget of the Minister of Finance exemplifies the desire of the government to protect Canadian consumers. When we think of the disastrous consequences that could have resulted from the budget of the previous government, it is clear that the situation of the Canadian consumer today would be much worse than it is now.

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[English]

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

##### ALLEGED FRAUDULENT COLLECTION OF BENEFITS

**Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Madam Speaker, I should like to ask a question concerning a matter which I think is quite serious and has probably received discussion in the full cabinet of the government, although the minister responsible is not here today. It concerns the implications of the testimony given at a trial here in Ottawa involving a man named Hawley Black who was charged with defrauding the UIC. I should like to ask a question of the Acting Prime Minister, the Acting Minister of Employment and Immigration, or whoever wishes to answer.

Mr. Yvon Charlebois, the executive director of the UIC, indicated in the course of that trial among other things that the Auditor General's projected figure of \$290 million in overpayments of UIC benefits because of fraud or lack of control was only accurate, "give or take \$100 million".

**Mr. McGrath:** Unbelievable!

**Mr. MacKay:** He also indicated instances where 109 SIN cards were in the possession of a man in Calgary who had filed 59 claims with the UIC, two people in Montreal had 60 SIN cards and over two months collected \$32,000, and there were other incidents. In view of those facts, I want to know what is being done in addition to the minister's statement on April 16.

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. MacKay:** I will come to the question. I want to ask the government, the Acting Prime Minister or some minister what

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is being done to ensure that fraudulent practice which is costing so much money is stopped and the money allocated to people who really need it.

[Translation]

**Mr. Dennis Dawson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, as was pointed out by the hon. member, the case of Mr. Black does demonstrate that departmental security forces and inspectors can monitor such incidents and this is why Mr. Black is now before the courts and why there was a trial.

With respect to the efforts made by the department, last year's report from the Auditor General clearly indicated there was progress made by the Department of Employment and Immigration in monitoring frauds, and the case raised by the hon. member shows that the department can protect its interests.

● (1140)

[English]

#### INQUIRY WHETHER ALLEGED FRAUDULENT ACTS DELIBERATE

**Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Solicitor General, but before I put that question may I point out to the hon. member opposite that that is exactly what did not happen. Mr. Black was not caught by benefit control procedures; he was caught by accident as a result of another matter entirely unrelated to this one, as the hon. member will see if he reads the evidence.

Since Mr. Black is a journalist and used to work in the Solicitor General's department, and since there is some evidence that he did this in a deliberate way to expose this particular shortcoming of the UIC, I would like to ask the Solicitor General whether the hon. gentleman or the Minister of Justice is taking into account whether or not a public service was performed by Mr. Black. Will there be any representations made with respect to sentence in terms of an absolute or partial discharge, taking into account all the circumstances? I assume the Solicitor General, in view of the magnitude of this case, is familiar with it.

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** I am familiar with the case and there will not be any special representation made on his behalf.

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#### PETRO-CANADA

##### CONSTRUCTION OF OIL DRILLING RIG

**Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and it is related to Petro-Canada and marine construction. The president of Petro-Canada announced in Halifax the construction of a \$100 million offshore oil drilling rig and said it would be built in Atlantic Canada, but the people in Atlantic Canada are concerned about the ability of our east coast shipyards to perform such a project. Will the minister indicate what steps