

S. O. 31

A decent wage for these workers is not out of the question given the profitable situation the Mint enjoys. An increase that reflects the cost of living is not unreasonable, given the bonuses paid to senior management.

The Mint has already spent on this strike alone more than a just wage settlement would have cost. I call on the Minister of Labour to take immediate steps to see a quick and fair settlement to this dispute. He has the authority to act and he should do so without delay.

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MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak again to the distress being felt by Canadian manufacturers in my riding of Northumberland and across Canada.

The GST, increased employer contributions to the Canada pension and Unemployment Insurance Programs, other burdensome government regulations, and the high cost of the Canadian dollar make sales in Canada and abroad next to impossible. What is more, the government is now suggesting a new payroll tax to finance wage protection for employees of bankrupt companies.

The Hudson's Bay Company chief executive officer is quoted as telling U.S. manufacturers that right now tariffs and value added taxes in Canada drive the cost of doing business in Canada 30 per cent higher than the U.S. rates.

Vagden Industries of Trenton, Ontario, a manufacturer of fine hosiery and a client of The Bay writes:

How in the world are we going to compete?

Does the government not understand the difficulties of this and thousands of other Canadian manufacturers? No new taxes, fairer taxes and recession time assistance programs are vital to the survival of Canadian business. The government must act now.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members will join me in wishing success to the peace conference on the Middle East which convened in Washington, D. C. yesterday.

After years of turmoil and much suffering there is hope for peace in the region and we commend the parties which are actively participating to achieve this.

• (1410)

Having recently visited the area, I can assure the House there is considerable optimism and hope that the problems of the region can be resolved through dialogue and that a number of issues can be resolved, including a homeland for the Palestinians.

In this regard one recognizes the patient and persistent efforts of U. S. President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker to initiate and ensure the success of the peace process.

At this season when we reflect on the message of peace on earth, there is no better example than the Washington conference. We welcome the chance for diminishing tensions and confrontations.

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RURAL DIGNITY

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, December 14 is an important anniversary in Canada. Rural Canadians from coast to coast to coast will recognize the determined efforts of the organization Rural Dignity, which has now been alive and fighting for five years.

Rural Dignity is a network of committed people who have rallied around issues such as the closure of rural post offices, cutbacks to VIA Rail and the struggle to maintain viable rural communities.

In the face of tough odds, a government determined to decimate the infrastructure of rural Canada, benign neglect by the big city media and the challenges of isolation, Rural Dignity has won some big victories. These victories are symbolized by the fact that while Canada Post has managed to close 1,200 rural post offices, there are also 1,200 rural post offices still open which Canada Post had planned to close by now.