

● (1450)

[Translation]

COMBINES

FIXING OF INSURANCE PREMIUMS—SMALL BUSINESSES AND MUNICIPALITIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Small Businesses) and concerns the Combines Investigation Act, which indicates very clearly that any combination that occurs in setting the prices of insurance premiums is illegal in Canada.

It is obvious that insurance companies have acted as a group to set the price of insurance premiums.

What is the Minister prepared to do for small businesses and municipalities which can expect a dramatic increase in the cost of their insurance premiums, indeed as much as 1,000 per cent?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to answer this question by pointing out to the Hon. Member that we are currently reviewing the Combines Investigation Act. We will be recommending various measures to Cabinet which will be adopted very shortly, and we will announce what these changes contain.

[English]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, the Minister should stop the blarney and start acting.

INCREASE IN INSURANCE PREMIUM

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Would the Minister tell the House what he is going to do about the case of the Hilan Corporation in Almonte whose insurance was increased from \$6,000 a year to \$47,000 per year? What is the Minister going to do about that?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this will be part of the recommendations we will be suggesting to Cabinet and which will be adopted. My hon. colleague will be advised of what they contain at that time.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

DESTROYER REFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Associate Minister of National Defence. Would the Minister tell the House how the Navy justifies a multimillion dollar refit for each of four destroyers when, as a Canadian

Oral Questions

an Press report indicates, they will be destined for the scrap heap one year later?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, because of many, many years of neglect, we have a destroyer fleet which is in sad need of repair in order to make it safe for sailors to go to sea. There is a program to replace these destroyers with new frigates actively under way. In that meantime there is a need to refit the existing destroyers for the reason I have just given. We are doing that in a way to minimize the cost involved, yet make it possible for our ships to satisfy our NATO requirements.

The press reports are inaccurate. The first destroyer will be tied up in 1988 when the first of the new frigates is commissioned. As other frigates are added, the ships will be mothballed. But it will all be done in an orderly fashion so that we can maintain our commitments to NATO and at the same time do it as economically as possible.

* * *

LOBBYING

INTRODUCTION OF REGULATORY LEGISLATION

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Friday, in answer to a question about a future Bill for registering lobbyists, the Minister is quoted in *Hansard* as saying: "Of course, we are examining all options to prepare a Bill which will meet the needs of the business sector". Will the Minister now rise in this House and explain what he meant by that statement? Would he also explain whether or not in the legislation he will guarantee that the names of the clients will be listed, as well as the amount of the fees and, more important, the amount expended by lobbyists for their clients will be made public?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Friday in my answer that we were looking at recommendations and various alternatives, since we want to be in a position to give this Government the assurance that our recommendations will be in the best interests of the business world, and that is indeed our intention.

PARLIAMENTARY LOBBYISTS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Last September the Prime Minister promised that the Government would request lobbyists not only to register but also to make public the names of their clients, as is the case now—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is a long preamble. Is there a question?