

*Oral Questions***CONSUMER AFFAIRS****TAX DISCOUNTERS**

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In April he met with a consumers' affairs group from Quebec, l'association coopérative d'économie familiale de Québec. At that time he told them he would move soon to stop the rip-off of low income Canadians by tax discounters. I want to remind the Minister that the majority of those affected are Canadians with incomes under \$8,000 a year. The majority are on welfare, or on unemployment insurance. The Minister has done nothing since that time. Why has the Minister done nothing? Why does he not move now to stop the rip-off of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money that should go to these low-income Canadians?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform the Hon. Member that we have completed our consultation sessions and expect to produce a consultation paper within the next few weeks. Subsequently, we shall be receiving comments and we shall act on those comments.

[English]

REQUEST THAT MINISTER TAKE ACTION

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, the Minister cannot get away with consulting any longer. He has heard from the National Anti-poverty Organization. He has heard from the Consumers Association of Canada. Throughout this year consumers associations from coast to coast have told the Minister exactly what they want. The Minister has done nothing.

Mr. Crosbie: You were Minister of National Revenue. You did not do a thing.

Mr. Rompkey: Will the Minister move now, immediately, to see that these economic and financial draculas are put back in their coffins?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can say that in fact the situation goes back to 1979, and the previous Government did absolutely nothing to deal with it. During the last seven months we have had a large number of consultation sessions. In fact, we have been consulting with all the agencies concerned, and as soon as we are in a position to take action, we shall do so forthwith.

[English]

LABOUR RELATIONS**AIR CANADA—TICKET AGENTS' STRIKE**

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. A number of groups this weekend asked the Prime Minister to intervene in a dispute between Air Canada and the union representing the 3,000 striking ticket agents. They have said Air Canada is taking full-time jobs, which are basically women's jobs, and making them into lower paying part-time jobs.

Since the Prime Minister was specifically asked to intervene, will he get up in this House and state whether the Government will instruct Air Canada to keep full-time jobs at a reasonable salary instead of turning them into part-time positions?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, that statement is a distortion of the facts. I think it can best be explained by the letter that went out from Air Canada officials to members of CALEA. Perhaps I can best respond to the Hon. Member's question by quoting from the letter as follows:

Our first priority is to settle the strike and get all of us back to our normal work activities. The Company remains prepared to meet with the Union in that spirit at any time, and to continue to show flexibility in seeking agreement on the improvements we believe are essential to our future as a Company.

I might say I have also had an opportunity to talk to the President of CALEA today. I suggested to him that it would be in the best interests of all to recommence negotiations, because Air Canada is prepared to sit down and negotiate in the spirit of flexibility as outlined in the letter.

HOURLY WAGE RATES

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister wants to read from Air Canada documents, the Air Canada document which I have admits that Air Canada is trying to reduce the starting salary from \$7.42 to \$6.13 an hour. With the drastic increase it wants in part-time workers, that will have the net effect of having less women working full time, and more working part-time at lower salaries. Is the Government supporting that policy?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, since there is obviously a distortion, or a misunderstanding of the facts, I think the Hon. Member would agree with me that it would be in the best interests of all parties to get back to the bargaining table and settle this thing once and for all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!