

Oral Questions

the words of the January 21 committee decision, how does the Minister dare put forward a law which also violates a Supreme Court of Canada ruling two years ago that anyone in Canada has a right to a fair hearing in Canada of his claim to be a refugee?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I said before in this House and elsewhere that I would introduce a Bill on the revision of refugee status at the appropriate time. I would urge the Hon. Member to wait until the Bill is introduced.

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[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

FEMALE POSTINGS

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It concerns the ridiculous RCMP policy concerning married couples in the Force. We learned today that the RCMP allowed an officer who is the daughter of a former Conservative cabinet Minister to be transferred closer to her husband while at the same time refusing similar transfer requests from five other female RCMP officers. Can the Minister explain this apparent double standard?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am advised that Constable Temple, along with five other members of the RCMP, was transferred to headquarters financial duties to meet an urgent operational need. Coincidentally, Constable Temple and one other female member's marriage plans were accommodated in meeting this situation and I am advised that this is fully consistent with RCMP guidelines.

REQUEST THAT POLICY BE CHANGED

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I hate to disagree with the Minister but, according to the RCMP, the daughter of the former cabinet Minister was transferred to Ottawa in conjunction with her forthcoming marriage. We agree with the decision to allow the wife of another officer to live with her husband. It was the right decision. What we disagree with is the fact that the same consideration of fairness and compassion was not applied to the other individuals involved.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister instruct the RCMP Commissioner to change its internal policy concerning married couples to ensure that fairness applies to all officers so as to ensure that where a request is made for married couples to live in the same locale, the request is met?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in the case of the specific incident the Hon. Member has raised I think I have answered that on the basis of the information provided to me by the RCMP. When the question was put to the Government the other day the President of the Treasury Board undertook to look into that particular policy issue and he is doing so. The Solicitor General is out of the country at the present time. I am sure that, consistent with the views of the Hon. Member, it will be looked at very seriously in that light.

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS

HIGH INTEREST RATES CHARGED TO CREDIT CARD USERS

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Today the Bank of Canada set the prime rate at 7.28 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Orlikow: That is exactly 5 per cent lower than it was when the Government took office.

Some Hon. Members: More!

Mr. Orlikow: Holders of department store credit cards are required to pay interest on their unpaid balance at a rate in excess of 28 per cent. Holders of gasoline credit cards are required to pay interest on their unpaid balance at a rate of 21 per cent. Will the Minister call in the management of these companies and instruct them it is time to stop ripping off their customers and reduce interest rates as their own interest rates have been reduced?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and remind the House that this is the lowest interest rate since 1974.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hockin: The Hon. Member raises an important point concerning credit card interest rates. We are looking forward to the standing committee report. I also raised this question today with members of the Canadian Bankers Association and they will be responding shortly.

INTERVENTION BY ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I point out to the Minister that the interest rates I have talked about are still unacceptably high. Will he look at the action taken by the Treasurer of the State of Illinois who, in January, was able to get interest rates on VISA and MasterCard dropped from 19 per cent to less than 14 per cent by threatening to remove state funds from banks which were overcharging on credit