

Oral Questions

Can the minister say today before the House rises—he can give me the date after Question Period—when this work will be done?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, with reference to Milligan's Shore, we are hoping to fund the dredging required there within the budget of the region. We will have a survey of the required dredging available by the end of June.

A reconstruction project at the Tignish co-op wharf would cost in excess of \$2 million and there is little probability I can fund it in the near future, unless somebody provides me with more money than it looks at the moment they are going to provide me.

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SENIORS INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMS

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

In February 1988 the government made a commitment to spend \$120 million over five years on seniors independence programs. After five years we see the government has spent just over half of what it had promised.

Why has the government cut back on these independence programs? I ask the minister if the programs will be continued and if the funding will be continued.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, our government respects its commitments. This independence program for seniors has been supported for nearly five years. So that groups could present projects that could be spread over two or three years, I asked Treasury Board to carry forward \$3.5 million until 1993-94. There have been no cuts in program funding. We have wonderful programs and projects and we will always continue to support the energy, assertiveness and will to act of Canada's seniors.

[*English*]

CREDIT CARDS

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The bank rate now stands at 5.91 per cent.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Rodriguez: The average credit card interest rate is 17.5 per cent, more than three times the bank rate.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Rodriguez: Is the minister prepared to call in the heads of Canada's largest financial institutions and instruct them to lower the interest rates on credit cards, or is he prepared to let them enjoy the music of: "Oh, what a friend we have in Pierre"?

Mr. Shields: Don't borrow on your credit card.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, although the hon. member did not mention it, I think that the committee on consumer and corporate affairs will table its report on credit cards today. I received a preliminary copy of this document.

I find it too bad that my colleague from Nickel Belt again wanted to be the black sheep by not signing the report, which could have been unanimous. I will have to study both reports, the one from the committee and the one from the hon. member for Nickel Belt. I will soon have the time to examine the recommendations made to the government. I think that the committee did an excellent job and we will be back shortly to respond to its recommendations.

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[*English*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. John Burdett, member of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of South Australia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.