

Presence in Gallery

mortgage has increased by \$40,000 over a 25-year period, which puts housing out of reach of ordinary people. Does the Minister intend to use his good offices to try to persuade the bank to roll back interest rates so that ordinary people can afford to buy housing?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, obviously it is in everybody's interest for us to have access to many markets and many sources of mortgage money, not only one, two, or three major institutions. I will be very much interested in knowing what the Hon. Member's Party intends to do when we bring in the mortgage protection plan. If, as I am informed, they intend to oppose it, I wonder what they offer those Canadians who, since March 1, have known that they could have access to an insurance plan which could go a long way to protect them against unexpected rises in interest rates.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT INTEREST RATES BE SET AT REASONABLE LEVEL

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, the Minister failed to answer my question. Perhaps I may ask a supplementary? As the Minister is aware, during the sixties Parliament set the mortgage rate at 6 per cent. Could the Minister inform the House whether he is prepared to do the same? In other words, is he prepared to introduce a Bill, setting the mortgage rate at a reasonable level for the average Canadian, since today, Canadians do not have the money to buy a home?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am not an expert on these matters, but it does seem to me that since we have access to a certain amount of money, by the savings of Canadians, and since these savings can be invested in either financial institutions or mortgages, the effect of the Hon. Member's proposal would be that the money available for residential mortgages would soon be exhausted. I would like to hear what the Hon. Member has to suggest as an alternative solution.

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[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF UNDER-SECRETARY OF THE
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OF KUWAIT

Mr. Speaker: May I call to the attention of the House the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Sheikh Nasser Mohamed Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Information of Kuwait, as well as Chairman of the Petroleum Information Committee of the Arab Gulf States.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

FISHERIES

PROPOSED LEGISLATION DEALING WITH WEST COAST FISHING
INDUSTRY

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Several weeks ago Senator Jack Austin made a speech in Vancouver in which he said that a West Coast fisheries Bill was imminent and that he expected it to be passed speedily by this House. That was several weeks ago. These rumours are not new. They have been going around for many weeks. Will a West Coast fisheries Bill be introduced during this session and, if so, when?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that my hon. friend has put that question to me. I am very optimistic that I will be able to table a Bill in the very near future. I am having last-minute consultations. If they are fruitful, I will be able to come forward with a policy that I hope the Hon. Member will be able to support. Next week I intend to have consultations with the Government of British Columbia to secure its support. After that, hopefully, the House will give the green light to this new policy.

TIMING OF IMPLEMENTATION

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, if this Bill does come before us, to what degree will its provisions be applicable during this season's venture, or will the provisions of the Bill not apply until sometime in the future, perhaps as long as a year from now?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I believe it is unwise to start unravelling the whole Bill today before Hon. Members. However, I can say this to my hon. friend. My objective is to relieve the pressure caused by the over-capacity of the fleet as quickly as possible. If the negotiations going on at the moment are fruitful, and I have the support of the Hon. Member, I hope that within this calendar year we can resolve a great part of the problem of over-capacity. That is, of course, if I have the co-operation of all the different players.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

RETAIL SALES PROJECT

Mr. Henri Tousignant (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for the Canada Post Corporation. Could the Minister inform the House what the situation is with respect to the Corporation's well-known plan to act as a middleman, or should I say promoter, for a company called Consumers Distributing? Does the Canada Post Corporation intend to extend this pilot project to the entire country? If it does, we