

Oral Questions

Will the minister give me assurance that he will consult immediately with the packaging industry to work out a mutually agreeable time at which the new regulation will take effect so that the 200 to 300 employees who are now unemployed can get back to work?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand the rationale of the company to have laid off people yesterday or today because it is not sure about what will happen. It should know. I was very clear about the date, September 1, and it was presented to the companies previously.

We consider it reasonable to believe it can be done. If there are many other reasons I do not know about to lay off people, that is fine, but it is not because there is uncertainty because there is no law which needs to be changed. It is regulations that have been passed by the government. They are ready to be applied. Everything is well known. The companies should know that.

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[Translation]

COMMUNICATION-QUÉBEC

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Supply and Services.

On February 1 and 2, I spoke in this House for maintaining the excellent service provided by Communication-Québec on federal programs and services for the federal government.

Can the minister tell us today if his department is implementing a new Info-Centre Canada service in Quebec and whether this service that Communication-Québec provides for programs will be eliminated by Christmas 1993?

If so, that is no gift.

[English]

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I believe the government announced back in the fall of 1992 that it was looking at a system of centralization for all federal information across Canada and that it was setting up some pilot projects to look at this.

I understand there are some pilots in place.

• (1450)

At the present time I am inquiring through Communications Quebec as to whether or not we can maintain the same arrangement we presently have, subject to price and availability, at least up until the end of December 1994 so that these things can be finalized one way or the other.

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SMALL BUSINESSES LOANS ACT

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for small businesses. It has to do with the changes passed in this House to the Small Businesses Loans Act. Incidentally they were much needed changes. My question is simply this. Can we expect more and better co-operation from the banks in relation to this act?

The second part of my question is: When can we expect implementation of the working capital provision within this act, which is probably the most important provision within this new act?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister for Science and Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend for his question. The new act is so different from the previous one that we should almost change its name to the super-duper loans act because it is a lot better than the previous one.

The banks, because of the increased guarantee and the increased commission, are very keen to promote it. They are already producing brochures. We are going to be producing our own brochure. Over a thousand will be sent to hon. members in the House of Commons and in the Senate to distribute.

We also are making sure that they are training their loan officers. Because they are under this act, the financial institutions will be limited on the amount of personal security that they can take against an SBLA loan. There will be many more funds left for working capital. That is the big advantage of these new changes.

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WYETH-AYERST

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister of industry.