

that there is a potential conflict of interest situation here, where the campaign director supporting the government party and advising the Prime Minister, in fact controls a company which has dealings with a department of the federal government in the area of racing, parimutuel betting licensing and saliva testing administration. Would the Acting Prime Minister consider this to be a genuine conflict of interest, and would he say whether directives will be coming out regarding the relationship between people holding positions of this nature and government departments?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not examined this case and therefore I am not in a position to say whether it represents a conflict of interest. I am sure that Senator Davey has behaved in accordance with proper standards, as is his custom. However, the general question of conflict of interest with respect to members of parliament has been, as the hon. member knows, the subject of a green paper. It has gone through parliamentary committee in the House of Commons and in the Senate. At the present time, as the hon. member knows, there is under preparation a bill which will be coming forward, dealing with the general question of the independence of parliament. Until that bill is passed, there is certainly a good deal of opinion and guidelines to be derived from the green paper and from the proceedings of the committees of both Houses.

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● (1130)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

POSSIBILITY OF INCREASE IN BASIC RATE OF PENSION AND CHANGE IN PROVISION GOVERNING WIDOW'S PENSION

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of the fact the increase in the cost of living is affecting those veterans on fixed incomes, I wonder if the minister could indicate to the House when he is going to correct the inequity in the basic rate of pension which is related to the five lowest categories in the public service. Those veterans are falling behind by hundreds of dollars a year, and I wonder if the minister can indicate when he is going to correct that inequity in the veterans' legislation.

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, we have had a study made in our department of this question and a lot of work has been done. As far as the exact time it will be implemented, I am not prepared to say at this time.

Mr. Marshall: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that veterans' spouses are faced with an inequity because they cannot get widows' pensions if their veteran husbands died when their pension was based on 48 per cent disability, I wonder if the minister could indicate, in line with the basic rate of pension, whether we will see changes in the legislation before the end of this session?

80018-11½

Oral Questions

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, it is not anticipated that there will be changes in legislation pertaining to either of those questions during this session.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF MANUFACTURING, IMPORTING OR PROCESSING OF MIREX—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. It relates to the task force report to the environmental contaminants committee regarding Mirex. One recommendation made by the task force concerning the control of Mirex is contained in one short sentence, wherein the task force recommends a prohibition against importation, manufacturing and processing of Mirex which might lead to its dispersal into the environment.

Is there any manufacturing or processing of Mirex in Canada, and if so, will the minister respond positively to the recommendation? Is there importation of Mirex which might be dispersed into the environment, and will he respond positively to the task force recommendation that such importation be prohibited?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the use of Mirex in Canada ceased some time ago. If my memory is correct, it was 1969. Thus, there is no utilization and no manufacturing. As for importation, that has stopped also. The complete prohibition is something which I will be discussing with my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, but we are favourably disposed to this recommendation.

SUGGESTION INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, NURSING MOTHERS AND THEIR BABIES EXPOSED TO MIREX BE MONITORED—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, there were two recommendations by the task force concerning information on Mirex, and in particular, the recommendation that certain Canadians be scrutinized in terms of their health very carefully. Recommendation No. 2 refers specifically to nursing mothers and their babies. Recommendation No. 3 deals with industrial workers known to have been occupationally exposed to Mirex.

Is it the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries and the Environment or the Department of National Health and Welfare, in which case the Minister of National Health and Welfare may want to answer this, to monitor those two groups? Are there immediate steps being taken as a result of the task force recommendations to monitor those two groups of Canadians?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a joint effort between the Department of National Health and Welfare and our-