

Oral Questions

● (1500)

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

ALLEGED WASTE OF MONEY IN PURCHASE OF ART
OBJECTS DISPLAYED OUTSIDE BUILDINGS—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works. In view of the growing protests over the waste and extravagance involved in the purchase of the art monstrosities now appearing before public buildings in Ottawa, when will the hon. gentleman be making changes in his fine arts program to ensure that these huge sums of money are spent in encouraging genuine Canadian art?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will allow the minister to reply but it seems to me that a question asked in those terms might well be placed on the order paper.

Hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works does not claim knowledge in the world of art. These specimens are chosen by a select committee composed of some of the best Canadian artists. It has been the policy of this and preceding governments to apply one per cent of the cost of a federal building to art surrounding the building. The question of what is art is a very subjective one and I would not want to impose my tastes nor the tastes of the hon. member on the public.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dinsdale: Does the minister intend to accept the advice of the hon. member for Cochrane, who has advised the government either to get rid of them or to place a shroud over them, or is he going to wait until the Canadian people place a shroud over the government?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

FAMILY ALLOWANCES—POSSIBLE DISCONTINUANCE IN
VIEW OF POSITION OF OPPOSITION

Mr. H. T. Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Has the minister given any thought to amending his proposed family allowance program for next year in view of the opposition expressed to a continuation of the program by the financial critic of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will appreciate that a question asked in those terms is never in order.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

DENIAL BY CORPORATION OF CANADA PENSION PLAN
BENEFITS TO MINERS—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO
RECTIFY

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. While expressing appreciation of the fact that he has corrected Tom Kent's wrongful approach to Canada Pension Plan benefits, will the minister carry this action one step further and ensure that Cape Breton miners on retirement will have returned to them the Canada Pension Plan benefits wrongfully taken from them by Mr. Kent?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, while I cannot, of course, accept the premise of the question since this matter is a legal one interpreted by the courts, a decision having been made I have indicated to the hon. member and the House, following discussions with the Minister of Justice, that if there is some avenue through which this question can be raised to determine the appropriateness of the hon. member's representations I am quite prepared to consider this. The Minister of Justice has indicated that he, too, will be looking into the matter.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member rises on a point of order.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the minister made reference to court action and to what the Minister of Justice may or may not have to say about the matter. In my question I expressed appreciation to the minister for the changes and benefits he has already made available to the miners since that court action. All I now ask is that he continue this same progressive method, disregard Tom Kent's representations, and give back to the miners what has been taken from them. This has nothing to do with the court action.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): He has already improved on the situation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): A question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member sought the floor to ask a question and he received an answer from the minister. He then rose on a point of order, though I do not think he wants me to rule on his point of order. He is now rising on a question of privilege. I will recognize him, but again I seek the co-operation of hon. members as we move closer to the end of the question period.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege because of a remark just made by the hon. member for St. Boniface. I