

*Oral Questions*

being right or wrong the allegations made by the hon. member until I make sure that some of these matters are correct.

**Mr. Symes:** Mr. Speaker, this price increase was brought to the minister's attention last November. He said then that he would investigate it. We followed it up in January. All the minister can assure us is that he is investigating. Meanwhile, prices are going up. Over the last two years, the wholesale price of two by fours has risen by 70 per cent, and only last week a further 10 per cent increase was announced with regard to both two by fours and plywood sheets.

● (1420)

Since the minister told the Consumers' Association of Canada yesterday that he expected companies with increased profits to practice price moderation, and that if they failed to do so he would have to take action, will he now call in the heads of the lumber industry and demand price rollbacks for domestic lumber?

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, I do not recall the hon. member or anybody else bringing this to my attention before Christmas, but the matter was brought to my attention last week.

I never said at any time that I would do the investigating, because I do not have the powers under the Inquiries Act that the director of investigations possesses under that statute. He has the right to use certain powers of search and seizure which I do not have, and he will carry out his responsibilities and report to me and to the public.

**Mr. Symes:** For the information of the minister, my hon. friend from Winnipeg North raised this matter with the minister on November 27 and my leader followed it up in January. Though the minister may not have precise legislative authority to take action, he certainly has the power to call in the heads of the industry and try to exercise moral suasion if the government is too timid to bring in legislation.

I should like to put another aspect of this question to him. Again, surely, it relates to something he can investigate with a view to taking action. I understand that upon conversion to metric measurement, plywood is one-sixteenth of an inch less in thickness than under the old Imperial measurement; in other words, there is 10 per cent less wood in an ordinary plywood sheet. We were assured when we passed the metrication bill that there would be no rip-off, as far as consumers were concerned, as a result of the conversion process. This being the case, will the minister now investigate this particular application of metric conversion and take up the matter with the company heads as well?

**Mr. Allmand:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have a team in the field already helping consumers adjust to the metric system.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh!

**Mr. Allmand:** We have already provided a great deal of help across the country and we will be glad to follow up that particular matter. With respect to calling in the heads of

[Mr. Allmand.]

businesses, we have done that before and we will do it again if it is necessary.

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[Translation]

### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

THREE WEEKS' BENEFITS PAYABLE TO PERSONS 65 YEARS OF AGE

**Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and concerns the three weeks of unemployment insurance benefits paid to anyone who reaches 65. Can the minister tell us whether, in view of the recent amendments to the unemployment insurance regulations, this payment will continue to be made, or if it will be cancelled?

**Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the same thing applies under the new legislation.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Could the minister try and find out why some government employees are phoning to tell us, as was the case this morning, that the three weeks of benefits would be discontinued. Could he enquire to find out if somebody is mistaken?

[English]

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, parliament makes the law, not the civil servants.

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● (1425)

### POST OFFICE

DOOR-TO-DOOR MAIL DELIVERY IN URBAN AREAS

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Postmaster General. On Friday, January 26 last I asked some questions with reference to Post Office inefficiency and gross misconduct which has taken place at the post office in the city of Calgary. The minister agreed to send an investigating team to Calgary.

Has the minister set up this team, in light of the fact that he has received a petition containing 241 signatures and complaining about post office service. The post office to which I refer is open only between eight in the morning and four in the afternoon. Weekly newspapers—for example, the Calgary North News—are sometimes delivered three weeks late. Would the minister tell the House what the team is doing? Has it made an investigation? There has been no improvement in the situation.

**Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I think that Calgary Area post office service is as