

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

[English]

**TRADE****SURCHARGE ON MEXICAN TEXTILES—EMBARGO ON CANADIAN NEWSPRINT**

**Mr. Ambrose Hubert Peddle (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador):** I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Will the minister advise us whether negotiations have been resumed between his officials and officials of the government of the Republic of Mexico in connection with the imposition of a surcharge on Mexican textile materials entering Canada and the placing by the Mexican government, in retaliation, of an embargo on all Canadian newsprint?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** If these negotiations have not been resumed today I have great hopes they will be resumed very soon. The problem is a very difficult one. As hon. members know, the Mexicans last year increased their export of cotton yarns to Canada by about ten times. We had to act. We imposed the surtax in November last and the Mexicans have formed a very low opinion of our move in this instance. We feel we were justified, though, and we are trying to come to terms with them now.

**Mr. Peddle:** Will the minister agree to make a statement in the House as soon as negotiations are resumed?

**Mr. Pepin:** I will keep the House informed.

[Later:]

**Mr. David Anderson (Esquimalt-Saanich):** My question is supplementary to the one dealing with restraint on textile imports. It is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. What steps have been taken to make sure that the interest of the Canadian consumer is being represented at these negotiations with foreign governments?

**HOUSING****NATIONAL COUNCIL ON HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview):** This question is addressed to the minister in charge of housing, Mr. Speaker. Having regard to the hon. gentleman's recent statement that he is encountering difficulties when it comes to talking to representatives of the municipalities on the subject of housing and urban affairs, may I ask whether it is the intention

[Mr. Pepin.]

to set up a national council on housing and urban affairs in an attempt to overcome these difficulties?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio):** Once again the hon. member's premise is inaccurate. I think the statement to which the hon. member referred was simply an explanation on my part that the federal government was willing to talk to anyone with expertise and advice to offer in the field of housing and urban affairs.

**HALIFAX—RELUCTANCE OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** This is a related question, Mr. Speaker. It has to do with a project of particular concern to the Halifax and Dartmouth area known as the Encounter on Urban Environment. Having regard to reports which indicate that federal civil servants were reluctant to answer questions addressed to them with regard to housing from people interested in this project, will the minister look into this matter with particular reference to the lack of co-operation shown?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio):** I saw the press report, too. It was interesting, and I am trying to find out what happened in Halifax.

**VETERANS AFFAIRS****REQUEST FOR INTERIM INCREASE IN PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES**

**Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford):** I have a question for the Minister of Veterans affairs, Mr. Speaker. Bearing in mind recent announcements by the government that there will be a large budgetary surplus amounting to several hundred million dollars this year, would the minister be prepared to make an announcement as soon as possible that an interim payment will be made to those receiving war veterans allowances and pensions prior to a final adjustment based on the recommendation of the Committee on Veterans Affairs? I realize it will take some time, because of the lengthy discussion of the Woods report—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The question has been asked and perhaps the minister would like to reply.

**Hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** These pensions were increased