

Oral Questions

which the central economic thrust will be the task of creating more jobs in the Canadian economy?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. gentleman that we will continue the work we have had under way for the preparation of the budget which will be announced in 1977. Naturally, the impact on employment and growth in the economy as well as the impact of inflation on any possible measures will be fully considered.

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Are we to conclude from the answer of the minister and that of the Prime Minister that the government has no definite plans but is simply keeping this serious and damaging problem affecting Canadians under review, and are we to expect initiatives to come only from the Bank of Canada but not from other sectors which Canadians expect to show serious leadership?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will recognize that statements on major economic decisions in this parliament occur in the course of a budget statement, and therefore the budget statement we are preparing will incorporate our conclusions on this point.

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TRANSPORT**ALLEGED INEQUITY OF FERRY SUBSIDIES FOR EAST AND WEST COASTS—GOVERNMENT ACTION**

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Since the Premier of British Columbia has sent a telegram to the Prime Minister on the subject of the inequality of ferry subsidies in Canada—

Mr. Fraser: Don't laugh about this; laughing will do you no good where I come from.

Mr. Clarke:—I ask, has the Prime Minister received such a telegram from Premier Bennett and is it the government's policy to allow the inequity of \$108 million for east coast ferries as contrasted with \$1 million for west coast ferries to continue, or what action can the west expect?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there is a long history of correspondence between myself and the present premier of British Columbia and, indeed, at least the two previous premiers. The federal point of view has been explained in those letters. There is an element to be still decided; but, so far as the inequities are concerned, I assure the hon. member that if he studies the facts, he will find that they are not inequities as he says they are.

Mr. Fraser: That is your view.

[Mr. Broadbent.]

NATIONAL DEFENCE**RELOCATION OF AIRBORNE REGIMENT—INVITATION TO MINISTER TO EXPLAIN TO CITIZENS OF EDMONTON**

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Defence. Would the minister accept an invitation to attend a public meeting in my constituency wherein is located the Canadian airborne regiment and where, accompanied by the Chief of the Defence Forces, he would be prepared to explain the government's views about the relocation of that unit, and in effect its destruction, and be prepared to answer questions both to the military and civilian population who, without exception, find this policy unacceptable?

An hon. Member: Wear your helmet.

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Chief of the Defence Staff is going to Edmonton in the next month to meet with the military and civilian officials there. I know he is going to meet with Mayor Cavanagh. I certainly would welcome the opportunity to speak to people in Edmonton. I hope the people in Edmonton show the same breadth of vision as they do in other places and on other issues and do not put the narrow focus on one regiment. I do not accept the premise that it means the destruction of the regiment.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Will the minister categorically answer whether he would accept an invitation to a public meeting in that constituency in order to discuss that matter?

Mr. Danson: No, Mr. Speaker, I really cannot conduct the affairs of the Department of National Defence by holding public meetings in an adversary situation. I would be pleased to meet with a delegation of people who want to come to see me or, if I am in Edmonton, I would be pleased to meet with a delegation of people there. I do not think a public forum is the place to discuss this type of matter where there is naturally, understandably and appreciatedly a sense of emotion about the loss of a very fine regiment to a very fine community. I understand that. I would like to discuss it with people dispassionately in terms of our military force structure. I am sure the people of Edmonton would understand that and I appreciate their reluctance to see the regiment go.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON PIPELINE FROM KITIMAT, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to questions asked earlier of the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday in answer to my question as to what environmental studies were available to the National Energy Board on the application of the consortium which wishes to build an oil pipeline from the Port of Kitimat on British Columbia's west coast through to the province of