

*Oral Questions*

Government is committed to proceeding with the Polar 8 icebreaker. A contract for that purpose will be awarded and announced as soon as the contract is ready, the contractee is ready and the contractor is ready.

## TIMING OF CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT

**Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Mr. Speaker, how many more times does the Minister expect the Conservative Government to be able to make this announcement without having awarded the contract?

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, when the time comes for me to make the announcement I hope the hon. gentleman will be as pleased with the announcement as I will be pleased.

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[Translation]

## PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS

## EASTMAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to all my colleagues.

I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

During the Liberal Party public hearings on pharmaceutical patents, most witnesses stated that the Eastman Commission recommendations were an acceptable compromise.

Now that the Minister is revising his Bill, can he assure us that the Government will bring the legislation in line with the Eastman Commission recommendations?

● (1440)

[English]

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, let me personally welcome the Hon. Member back and say that she has made an amazing recovery and we are all very pleased.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Andre:** What I indicated yesterday is what the Deputy Prime Minister indicated. There will be some refinements to the legislation but they will not be major changes. We are convinced that the package basically provides far more benefits to Canadians than costs. When one makes a change where the benefits outweigh the costs by a considerable margin, then it is a worth-while thing to do.

[Translation]

## PRICE OF NEW DRUGS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic):** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the same Minister.

In answer to a question yesterday the Minister indicated that there will be absolutely no increase in drug prices.

My question relates to new drugs. Can the Minister assure us that there will be no price increase for new drugs?

[English]

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to talk about increases in drugs that are not yet discovered. Increases over what? However, the legislation provides for a drug price review board which will be chaired by Doctor Eastman to ensure that the prices of any drugs not yet discovered—but hopefully including some discovered in Canada to benefit the health of Canadians—will be reasonable. That is the purpose of the drug price review board. We feel confident that the mechanisms we will have in place will guarantee that.

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## LABOUR CONDITIONS

## UNEMPLOYMENT IN ATLANTIC CANADA

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. His speech in the House yesterday was disappointing to people in Atlantic Canada. Since the Government has come to power, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August in Atlantic Canada went from 13 per cent to 15.9 per cent. What new measures is the Government willing to introduce to help the people in that region?

[Translation]

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, we announced the creation of a special agency for the Atlantic provinces. Naturally, the Department of Employment and Immigration will be working very closely with this agency. I said yesterday in my speech, as I said in the regions, and especially in the Atlantic provinces, that after a year of implementing the job strategy, we now intended to consider, while maintaining the basic principles of the strategy, how certain adjustments could be made, especially for the Atlantic region, so that we could provide special assistance for these provinces, as was pointed out by the Prime Minister recently.

That is what we intend to do, but I wish the Hon. Member would understand that after only one year of implementing the job strategy, it makes sense to maintain the strategy before we look at its impact and make the necessary adjustments.