

Oral Questions

bizarre publication reminiscent of the Cold War of 30 or 40 years ago. Would the Minister take steps to examine this situation and ensure that tens of thousands more copies of the publication are not sent out to Canadians? This is an unbelievably bizarre Government publication.

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has presented a situation which is deserving of an inquiry. I do not know the date of the publication. I will investigate and reply to him.

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PUBLIC SERVICE**LAPSING OF FUNDS BY DEPARTMENTS**

Mr. Don Ravis (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. The issue of lapsing funds at the end of the fiscal year in dozens of Departments was to be addressed by the Government in the past months. It is certainly of concern to the Public Accounts Committee as well as taxpayers in general. What progress, if any, has been made on this issue?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that we have been monitoring our spending patterns very closely. As he will know from the Supplementary Estimates which I tabled this morning, which were the lowest for any equivalent period of time since 1972-73, we are on track and well within the spending limits set by the Minister of Finance. We follow the issue of lapsing funds very closely. We were able to reduce the amount of lapsing funds considerably last year. Through the measures which were introduced by the Treasury Board and the Comptroller General this year, we expect that performance will be repeated.

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TRADE**UNITED STATES DUTY ON CANADIAN SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister for International Trade, I will direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. We are rapidly reaching the end of the road of negotiations with the United States on the dispute about softwood lumber. Although we question the action, Canada has only until November 28 to negotiate a suspension agreement with the United States in response to the 15 per cent duty on softwood lumber.

Is it the intention of the Government to negotiate such a suspension agreement with the United States? If so, has the Government come to an agreement with the provinces with

regard to the level to which the stumpage fees will be increased?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I just replied to the Hon. Member's colleague that meetings with the provinces and the federal Government are taking place at this moment. When there is an announcement to be made with regard to the action being taken, it will be made in the appropriate manner by the Minister.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I recall very clearly the question asked by my colleague for Algoma a while ago. The Minister did not reply to my colleague and he is not replying now. We are simply asking whether the Government of Canada intends to use the suspension agreement in the softwood lumber disagreement. Is this what the federal Government has decided to do or does it intend simply to appeal to international organizations such as GATT?

[English]

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the Hon. Member is expressing his position on the negotiations.

Mr. Garneau: I am asking the question.

Mr. McDermid: If that is the Liberal position, we are pleased to have it, because that is something new and different.

Mr. Garneau: Answer the question. You are the Government.

Mr. McDermid: I will repeat what I said earlier to the Hon. Member. Those discussions are going on at this time. When there is an announcement to be made, it will be made in the proper forum by the Minister.

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ABORIGINAL RIGHTS**SETTLEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE CLAIMS**

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question would appropriately be directed to the Prime Minister who, on several occasions, has stated a commitment on the part of the Government to fairness and justice for the native people of Canada. Can the Government assure this House and the native people of Canada, whose future so much depends on it, that there will be adopted in the near future a fair policy for the settlement of comprehensive claims?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think the