

Oral Questions

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

BENEFIT CONTROL—GOVERNMENT ACTION FOLLOWING
FINAL REPORT BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In light of the final report of the Unemployment Insurance Commission advisory committee which revealed very extensive abuse and harassment of claimants by benefit control officers, and in view of the pious denials of such practices by both the minister and his head office officials, can the minister inform the House what steps he intends to take to ensure that justice is accorded to those who were unjustly disentitled or disqualified under the conditions criticized in the final report of the advisory committee?

● (1500)

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in my reply to the chairman of the advisory committee, which was tabled at the same time as the report, I indicated that a great number of steps had already been taken. The information on the activity of the committee was very valuable to us, but we did not await the publication of the final report to take suggestions which have been implemented long ago. These steps are outlined in that document and in the statement I made to the House two or three weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will be recognized on a supplementary, after which the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, what steps does the minister intend to take to make sure that those who were disentitled or disqualified unjustly over the last six months will now receive justice in respect of that disentitlement or disqualification?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, the appeal system has been available to claimants who felt they were unjustly disentitled or disqualified. I think they were very few in number. The appeal system is working well.

Mr. Speaker: I recognize the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member rises on a point of order. I apologize to the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi; he will be recognized in a moment.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, the minister has just told the House that the people who were treated in that manner can go through the normal process of appeal. They have 30 days in which to file an appeal and some of these cases took place five months ago.

[Mr. Munro (Hamilton East).]

ENERGY

EXPORT OF OIL PRODUCTS THROUGH EASTERN CANADA
CUSTOMS POINTS—REASON FOR ISSUING PERMITS—
COMPANIES TO WHICH "FORCE MAJEURE" MAY APPLY

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, in view of the unprecedented quantity of petroleum products being directed from Canada to the United States through eastern Canadian customs points, I direct this question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. On what grounds has the National Energy Board issued this unprecedented number of export permits, what are the countries of origin of the crude oil involved, and are the products which are going through these border points at such an unprecedented rate being exported as surplus to Canadian requirements?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, one would have to know the time frame, but most of the oil products in this country are now covered by export control and no valid export can take place without a specific judgment by the National Energy Board that a particular shipment is surplus to Canadian requirements. If the hon. member would indicate the specific time frame and also the border points involved, I would be glad to get the details to answer his question.

Mr. Grafftey: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question based on the following statement yesterday by the minister, to be found at page 8179 of *Hansard*:

My understanding at the moment is that this redistribution has not taken place but the companies have indicated there is a prospective interruption under the *force majeure* provision of the supplying contracts.

Would the minister now inform the House exactly which companies he was referring to?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about eastern Canadian refineries. I would point out to the hon. member that this is a different situation from the one he referred to in the first part of his question. He referred to the exporting of products from Canada. This is covered by the National Energy Board. The companies in question would be the various eastern Canadian refineries. I would be glad to get a list of them and the locations, which are generally publicly available.

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ENSURE "FORCE
MAJEURE" CLAUSE IN CONTRACTS NOT USED TO
DETIMENT OF CANADIAN CONSUMERS

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In light of his broadcast statement to the Canadian people that Canadian consumers will not be allowed to suffer, will he direct the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to ensure that those very doubtful contracts are not invoked to the detriment of consumers of petroleum products in Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think this is a suggestion by the hon. member