

Oral Questions

ton West, and since this is a matter with which the minister has been involved, will the minister have his department check into the propriety of this decision and ensure that proper studies and tests are carried out to protect the residents of the Great Lakes area?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): As the hon. gentleman knows, we are dealing here essentially with a question under the jurisdiction of the provincial government of Ontario, but given the very evident concern he has expressed, I will have my officials look into the matter.

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METRIC CONVERSION**MEMORANDUM RESPECTING RESUMPTION OF PROGRAM**

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, my question was to be directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs or, in his absence, to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. However, in the absence of both of them, I wonder if I might put my question to the Prime Minister. It concerns a memo delivered to my office this morning which says, in one line, that we can expect, as members of Parliament, a low-key announcement or a press release on the resumption of forced metric conversion coast to coast on January 1, 1982, this announcement to take place in late December or early January at a time when the public and the press are still in a festive period and not on the alert.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Domm: Would the Prime Minister advise the House if a decision has been made by the Privy Council, the cabinet or any of his ministers to proceed with forced implementation of metric conversion in the retail food sector on January 1?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Would the hon. member say who signed the memo, Madam Speaker?

An hon. Member: Pierre Trudeau.

Mr. Domm: The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs advised the House that they were considering proceeding with metric conversion on January 1, 1982. My question to the Prime Minister is this. In light of his minister's confirmation of the intent and in light of this notice, would the Prime Minister confirm to the House that it is a fact that the government is going to proceed coast to coast in the retail food sector with metric conversion on January 1, 1982?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, we have a minister present who could deal with the substance of the question, but the hon. member prefaced his question by saying he had received a one line memo, if I understood him correctly. Could he tell us who signed that one line memo so that we know with whom we are dealing in the House?

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Domm: Madam Speaker, this is not my supplementary question, but I will tell the Prime Minister that it was his own ministry which confirmed to the House that forced metric conversion will proceed.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Trudeau: Who signed the memo?

An hon. Member: Who is questioning whom around here?

Mr. Domm: My supplementary question to the Prime Minister is this.

An hon. Member: It's gossip, that's what it is.

Mr. Domm: This is not gossip.

An hon. Member: They don't sign memos.

Mr. Domm: My question deals with an American press release today. The American press has notified the people of the United States that Congress is not going to proceed with forced metric conversion for ten or 15 years in the retail food sector in the United States. Would the Prime Minister state in the House that, so far as metric conversion is concerned, we should be in harmony with our trading partner to the south and not be an island unto ourselves. My supplementary question is this. His ministry has confirmed that we might proceed with metric conversion on January 1, 1982. Would the Prime Minister confirm that there has been a decision to proceed, or are we being given no direction? Will there be metric conversion, regardless whether or not the United States is with us?

Some hon. Members: Put the question.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, hon. members here have difficulties when hon. members opposite do not follow the rules and introduce all kinds of preambles to their questions, trying to use preambles to convey falsehoods or spread rumours which are unfounded. I wish the hon. member would come clear and give us a copy of that memo so we could know to whom he is referring.

An hon. Member: Answer the policy question.

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REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION**LOCKEPORT, N.S.—RECONSTRUCTION OF FISH PLANT**

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, I should like to address my question to the Minister of Finance who is from Nova Scotia. On July 23 of this year, a fire in Lockeport, Nova Scotia, destroyed the National Sea Products fish plant which was the major employer of some 300 people in the community of 1,030 people. Could the minister indicate to the House and to the people in that community who are