

*Inquiries of the Ministry***TRADE****ALLEGED IMPORTATION OF KOREAN TOBACCO**

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Can the minister tell the House whether or not three million pounds of Korean tobacco were imported into Canada during the last two months for use by Rothman's Tobacco Company?

Mr. Speaker: This kind of question ought to be placed on the order paper. If there is urgency it may be discussed at ten o'clock.

Mr. Nesbitt: On a point of order, may I say that the tobacco auctions are in progress at the present time, and this is a matter of urgent importance to the industry in light of its marketing activities.

Mr. Speaker: If there is urgency which is still not apparent to the Chair, perhaps the minister might reply quickly.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Do I understand that the hon. member has in mind imports of flue-cured tobacco from Korea?

Mr. Nesbitt: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pepin: If that is the case, I have checked with the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and I find there is no record of such imports in the first 11 months of the year. This is all the information that I have up to the present. Now that the hon. member provides me with further clues, I will be glad to try to procure any additional information I can.

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FINANCE**GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES IN RELATION TO GROWTH OF ECONOMY**

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): I wish to address a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that government expenditures have risen by 58 per cent in the past four years while the economy grew by only 36 per cent, is the government making any plans to review its expenditures so as to keep them at least in line with the growth of the economy, thereby assisting in the control of inflation?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will not allow the minister to reply to the question. The question should be placed on the order paper. In any event, it is not the kind of question which can be asked during the question period.

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CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**PETITION RESPECTING PENSION PLAN OR IMPROVED EARLY RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR FORMER COAL MINERS**

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): I have a question for the President of the Privy Council. Inasmuch as he has now had an opportunity to review

[Mr. Speaker.]

the petition placed before the House in connection with section 18 of Bill C-135, can the hon. gentleman indicate what his intentions are in this respect?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): The only aspect of the question I have been considering is the procedure by which the petition could be considered by the House or by a committee. There have been discussions with the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion and his Parliamentary Secretary, and with the chairman of the standing committee. It may be we can work out a method by which the petition can be considered by that committee. I believe there is a difficulty which hon. members can appreciate: if formal reference of the petition were made to the committee, similar petitions in future would have to be dealt with in the same way. This is a matter which has some consequence from the point of view of our over-all operations. Nevertheless, because of the special nature of the petition and especially its origin, I am particularly interested in having it considered in some place.

Mr. MacInnis: Am I to understand that the government is reluctant to allow a well-established precedent to operate here?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think that this is argument. It would seem to me that perhaps what we should do is allow the hon. member and the President of the Privy Council to go into the matter together and try to find a solution, as suggested by the Chair originally.

Mr. MacInnis: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I think my question of privilege is well established by the question of privilege with which the Prime Minister got away a few moments ago. When the petition was tabled I co-operated with the House and with the House Leader and gave him every opportunity to study the petition and the bill. With regard to sending it to the committee, it was my hope that the government would see fit to send it to the committee for study, and also that it would be sent to the justice and legal affairs committee, with the emphasis on the justice. We have before us—

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is not a point of order or a question of privilege. The hon. member's personal privileges have not been offended, to my way of thinking. I suggest to the hon. member that our chances of finding a solution to the important point that he raised the other day are much better than he may think. He will remember that when the question was raised before the House by way of a petition I asked whether there was unanimous consent of the House, and I gathered that we were pretty close to achieving that. I am hopeful that we may still be able to achieve this, but in view of the briefness of the question period I do not think we are helping the situation at this point by pursuing the matter as a question of privilege.

Mr. MacInnis: Then may I once again ask the Chair for guidance. Where does one seek justice? I have discussed this matter with the minister and the minister is reluctant to send it to the committee to be dealt with. I have