

Oral Questions

[English]

SMALL LOANS ACT

CO-OPERATIVES—REGISTRATION UNDER LEGISLATION

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State (Finance). It involves the Small Loans Act which was passed in 1939 to serve purposes which are no longer with us.

If the act is kept in force, it will require some 4,400 co-operatives to be registered under federal legislation. My question to the minister is: Is the minister considering repealing or amending the Small Loans Act?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussièrès (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance and I have received many representations from several hon. members, as well as the hon. member who has just put the question, with regard to the difficulties posed by the Small Loans Act. As the hon. member pointed out in his question, we are looking into two possibilities, namely repealing the act completely or amending it. All hon. members will surely understand, Madam Speaker, that we must take a very close look at the consequences of either amending or repealing the act. As soon as that study has been completed we will reach a decision. We want to act quickly because we are aware of the problems the current situation is creating for the caisses populaires and credit unions. As soon as a decision has been made, we shall advise the House of our intentions.

[English]

Mr. Taylor: I appreciate the answer by the minister, Madam Speaker. I wonder whether he has a suggested time-frame with regard to when this change might take place—either repealing or amending.

[Translation]

Mr. Bussièrès: Madam Speaker, the time-frame is as soon as possible.

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[English]

ENERGY

OWNERSHIP OF PETROLEUM INDUSTRY—POLICY ON COAL

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I am somewhat tempted to ask my question in the tongue of my ancestors, but I will resist that temptation.

Some hon. Members: Please do.

Mr. Yurko: It is not an official language. Madam Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of State for Mines. In light of the stated specific goal of the government in the throne speech, that at least 50 per cent Canadian ownership of the petroleum industry will be effected by 1990, could the minister advise the House whether she, her government or any of its ministers are contemplating a similar policy, or have under review a similar policy for the coal industry?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State (Mines)): Madam Speaker, there is no similar policy under consideration at the moment, although we are encouraging Canadian ownership as much as we can of the mineral industry. We are, therefore, looking at ways to encourage the junior mining industries in some tax ways; but at the moment there is no policy of 50 per cent ownership.

Mr. Yurko: Madam Speaker, the export tonnage of coal, particularly to Japan, is expected to rise substantially in the next few years. Can the minister advise the House whether all new coal export contracts will be subject to federal government agreement, either through the National Energy Board or directly by the government, as to the price of coal—and is the federal government considering an export tax on coal?

Mrs. Erola: The coal deal, as you know, Madam Speaker, has not been finalized, but the federal presence will be very much there. As a matter of fact, negotiations will include a federal as well as a provincial presence during the negotiations.

DISCUSSIONS ON PURCHASE OF SUNCOR

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, if I can get his attention.

Mr. Lalonde: Yes, I am listening.

Mr. Shields: Last Monday, while the minister was walking all those extra miles, I directed a question to the Prime Minister that I should like to redirect to this minister. Has his government, or any department, initiated or taken part, through any Crown corporation or, indeed, PetroCan in discussions with Suncor regarding its purchase and, if so, what has taken place so far?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I want to confirm for the hon. member that I am not aware of any such discussions and my department has not been involved in any such discussions.

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, would the minister inquire through Crown corporations or, indeed, PetroCan, if discussions are taking place, and will he report back to this House soon?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I would raise a serious question as to whether it would be appropriate for me to inquire from PetroCan at this time whether they are carrying on negotiations and with whom.

As the hon. member knows, these types of discussions of a business nature are usually kept to a very, very limited number of individuals, even inside a corporation; and I, frankly, do not think it would be wise for me to even try to attempt to get this information at this stage.

NATURAL GAS PIPELINE TO VANCOUVER ISLAND

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, "Je voudrais poser ma question au Ministre de l'Énergie." I