

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB VACANCY INCREASE AND
INCREASE IN BENEFITS PAID

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. In view of the publication today of statistics expecting the rate of rise in job vacancies in this country, is the minister's department undertaking a study to determine whether or not that rise in the rate of job vacancies is related to the rise in unemployment insurance benefits that are being paid out?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we have a monitoring process which was described in fairly gory detail in the House in the spring and which in several ways is constantly monitoring the activities of claimants to make sure they recognize their clear obligation to conduct an active job search. As vacancies occur in any given area and are identified, then that obligation becomes more intense, and our approach to claimants reflects this.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

GAGETOWN BASE—REQUEST FOR PROGRAMS TO
ACHIEVE FULL UTILIZATION

Mr. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. In view of the excellent facilities at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown which are not being fully utilized, will the minister give consideration to new programs which will take advantage of the substantial public investment there?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to assure the hon. member that the Department of National Defence recognizes the value of the training facilities at Gagetown. We intend to make full use of them and in fact expand them over the years.

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TRANSPORT

REQUEST THAT SEAWAY BE KEPT OPEN BEYOND NORMAL
CLOSING DATE

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. In view of the failure of the railroads to move grain through the port of Thunder Bay at an adequate rate, and in view of the possibility that in the event of an impending oil shortage in the east considerable quantities of oil may be moved by tanker, is the minister considering ways and means by which the seaway might be kept open beyond the normal closing date?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if this is useful and it can be done we shall examine it, but we have no control over the weather and ice. This suggestion will be kept on the desk and if it is feasible the hon. member can be sure that we will take it into consideration.

Oral Questions
PUBLIC SERVICE

POSSIBILITY OF REVIEW OF NURSES' WAGES AND FRINGE
BENEFITS IN LIGHT OF DISCONTENT

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of continuing nationwide discontent expressed by nurses under Treasury Board jurisdiction in regard to wage disparities and fringe benefits compared with those prevailing in the private sector and provincially, does the right hon. gentleman intend to instruct the President of the Treasury Board to review the situation with particular reference to section 76 of the Public Service Staff Relations Act?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have absolute confidence in the President of the Treasury Board's handling of this matter.

● (1450)

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, in view of reports received from the nurses that they intend to seek a meeting with the Prime Minister to explore their grievance when he is in Halifax in the near future, will the Prime Minister agree to meet with them at that time?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I have not received such a suggestion until now. I will look into the matter.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

STEPS TO ENSURE PROPER CARE OF VETERANS IN LIGHT
OF NURSES' DISCONTENT RESPECTING PAY

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of the fact hundreds of nurses involved in the dispute are working at veterans hospitals, will the minister advise, further to what he told me yesterday, what steps he is taking to ensure that those veterans under chronic and domiciliary care will receive proper treatment continuously?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): The information I have from across the country is that the patients are receiving good care and that the morale is good and the nurses are doing a terrific job.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton will be recognized for the purpose of a supplementary. The Chair will then see the Leader of the Opposition and call orders of the day.

MEASURES TO INCREASE BED CAPACITY IN HOSPITALS

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and concerns the backlog of veterans seeking admission to veterans hospitals, especially at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. What measures has the minister taken to increase the bed capacity of veterans hospitals?