

Oral Questions

protectionism in the American market; and whereas mining has a minister of state in the federal government, and also a very high priority with the federal government, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton):

That the following priorities be established by the federal government: first, an upgrading of the forestry branch, at least to provide a full deputy minister in charge, if not a minister of state; second, that a long term forest policy be developed by the federal government based on stability of the resource and long term employment for the individuals involved; third, the introduction of an international forest products marketing corporation so that Canadians can expect that Canadian institutions will market their products abroad instead of international or foreign competitors, as is the present situation in many cases.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

LIFE INSURANCE FOR ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43. At a time when the Canadian economy is in critical condition, when the government should be protecting Canadian jobs and, wherever possible, stopping the flow of Canadian dollars to the United States, the life insurance plan endorsed and supported by the Department of National Defence for Canadian troops, involving more than 40,000 participants, and tens of millions of dollars in premiums, is carried by three American-owned insurance companies. Therefore I move:

● (1415)

That this House direct the Minister of National Defence to reopen the contract for life insurance for the troops, and limit bidding to the 33 Canadian-owned life insurance companies operating in this country.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE

REPORTS OF HIRING FREEZE

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board who will know of published reports last week quoting Jayne Simms of the Public Service Commission indicating "there is definitely some kind of a push on" with regard to filling vacant

positions in the public service in anticipation of a hiring freeze. The minister may also know that senior departmental officials in more than one department are indicating that there is indeed a push on, both to fill vacant positions and to turn temporary employees into permanent employees in advance of an expected hiring freeze to be brought in tonight. Departmental officials are saying it is a done thing already. How did that information about the budget get out? Presumably it got out through Treasury Board. And what is he going to do about it?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance will be making his statement on the budget tonight at eight o'clock.

QUERY RESPECTING KNOWLEDGE OF DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, the minister appears not to have understood the question. The question comes within his purview. Why are departments today, and why were they last Friday, Thursday and Wednesday, moving to fill vacant positions, with full support apparently of the Public Service Commission? How did they know that a hiring freeze is being brought in tonight in advance of the finance minister's announcement? Did it come from his department? If not, will the minister undertake to find out how the departments know?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I understood the question perfectly well. Apparently the hon. member did not understand my answer. The Minister of Finance is delivering his budget at eight o'clock this evening.

Mr. Bosley: That is the rankest disregard for a budget leak I have ever heard, even from this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST THAT HIRINGS PROCEED NORMALLY

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the minister responsible for the Treasury Board and for all public hiring. How does the President of the Treasury Board condone, (a) a budget leak, and (b) a budget leak which has the effect of making a mockery of the restraint that he personally has been talking about for so long? Will he undertake in this House today to ensure that hirings proceed as normal so that the people of Canada will know that, whatever happens tonight, the public service of this country was not given advance notice so that it can be protected?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I find this whole line of questioning just a lot of rubbish. I suggest that the hon. member for Don Valley West wait until the minister delivers his budget speech at eight o'clock.