

Order Paper Questions

NATIONAL DEFENCE—BUDGET

Question No. 543—Mr. McKinnon:

Did the Minister of National Defence make a speech to the Men's Canadian Club of Winnipeg on October 5, 1978 in which he stated that DND's budget for next year was \$4.5 billion and, if so (a) is this an accurate figure (b) what part of this increase of \$372 million over the 1978-79 budget is accounted for by (i) inflation (ii) real increase in the capital budget (iii) real increase in the overall budget in accordance with NATO commitments?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): (a) and (b)(i), (ii), (iii) Yes. The Minister of National Defence did refer to a \$4.5 billion budget for next year. However, the 1979-80 Estimates-Budget is currently the subject of discussion-negotiation with Treasury Board, and neither the precise total nor details of content have been finalized.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES

Question No. 595—Mr. Holmes:

1. How many inter-departmental and intra-departmental committees are there in the various departments, agencies and Crown corporations and, in each case (a) how frequent does it meet within a fiscal year (b) what is the name of the committee and for what purpose was it constituted (c) how many man-days are used at each meeting?

2. In the case of each committee, were any meetings held outside the City of Ottawa and, if so (a) in what locations (b) at what cost (c) how many persons attended the meeting from (i) Ottawa (ii) other areas of the country?

Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): No registry of inter-departmental or intra-departmental committees is maintained, either centrally or within each department. The information requested, therefore, could only be provided by a major expenditure of resources, which is not warranted in relation to the subject matter in question.

CUSTOMS OFFICE—EDMONTON

Question No. 609—Mr. Malone:

1. Does a client have to pay storage charges on items (a) that are being cleared (b) prior to their being cleared by Canada Customs and, if so, for what reason?

2. What was the largest payment made for storage at the Edmonton Customs and Excise Office for the period January 1 to November 1, 1978?

3. Is there a maximum length of time an item can be stored and, if so, what is the time period?

4. Is there a shortage of staff to clear items through customs and, if so, for what reason?

5. Do customs officers in Ottawa refuse to answer their telephones when called by brokers in Edmonton in an attempt to obtain clearance on items and, if so, for what reason?

6. Are some shipments cleared in two days and at a later time clearance may require more than a month for a similar shipment and, if so, for what reason is there a variation?

7. Does a client have any recourse to a customs office that unduly holds items and then, in turn, unduly charges the costs to the client and, if so, what is it?

Hon. A. C. Abbott (Minister of National Revenue): 1. Goods imported into Canada, other than parcel post shipments, must be stored before entry is made in a sufferance

warehouse for safe-keeping. Sufferance warehouses are not operated by the department and any storage charges assessed are payable to the warehousekeeper in accordance with his scheduled warehouse storage rates.

2. For the period of January 1 to November 1, 1978, the Edmonton Customs and Excise office has not assessed or received any payment for storage charges.

3. Goods may be stored in a sufferance warehouse for 30 days, and in a bonded warehouse for a period of two years. Parcel post shipments may remain in customs custody for 30 days.

4. Staff allocated to goods clearance is considered adequate to facilitate processing and release of shipments directed to Edmonton.

5. Officers in Ottawa are always at the disposal of importers or brokers to discuss customs matters. The clearance of items at local customs is contingent upon the presentation of quality entry documents and the payment of duty and taxes. The clearance function is the responsibility of local customs staff and not of Ottawa personnel.

6. Customs is responsible for the protection of Canadians and the Canadian economy with respect to certain imported goods, and release may be declined until the requirements of other departments or agencies are fulfilled. Unless precluded from granting release by external requirements such as mentioned in the previous sentence, customs shipments are generally cleared within hours of presentation of properly completed entry documents.

7. Subject to the requirements mentioned in part 6 above, goods are not held by customs after formal entry has been made. Once clearance has been granted, the goods are released to the post office, to the importer or to the carrier for delivery to the consignee.

FORESTRY POLICY

Question No. 616—Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):

Does the Canadian Council of Resource and Environmental Ministers have committees meeting to examine national forestry policy and, if so, will the government suspend implementation of cutbacks in the operating programme of the Canadian Forestry Service until their report is received in June?

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)): The Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers is sponsoring a study of some aspects of national forest policy, specifically the current status of the forest resource and measures dealing with its protection and enhancement. Several working groups involved in the study have met, but no report is expected until June 1979. This report will not constitute a national forest policy. The government is not planning to suspend implementation of cutbacks in the Canadian Forestry Service until the report is received.