

PREPARATION OF ESTIMATES

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister will have to meet with his Department, but having been a member of the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet for several months now, how can the Minister sit idly by while his Party's commitment to 6 per cent real growth in defence spending is ignored? He was on that committee when these estimates were talked about. You have simply made defence another sacred trust, and I ask you where is that trust? You were there.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, it is totally unlike the Hon. Member, who is usually calm and a gentleman in the House, to be so uptight. All I am suggesting to him is that as soon as I have had the opportunity to look into his very important question I will get back to him and give him the answer that this question deserves.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DAMAGE CAUSED BY RING-BILLED GULLS

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. The Municipal Council of Downie Township in Perth County, which is my riding, and many others in the farming areas of Ontario, have voiced concern with respect to the massive population of ring-billed gulls and the damage and bother they cause. Would the Minister tell this House how her Ministry will deal with the farmers' problems?

[Translation]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the problems the ring-billed gulls cause farmers and, with the officials of my Department, I have taken action so that by telephoning our offices, the farmers will immediately learn what to do to chase away these birds which damage their crops.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

TWIN-TRACKING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. He may know that yesterday Conservatives in the House thwarted the unanimous will of two Standing Committees of this House with respect to a recommendation that the twin-tracking being done by CN in the Ashcroft subdivision be stopped. Given the Prime Minister's interest in parliamentary reform, and his desire to increase respect for Parliament and the judgment of committees and Members of Parliament, will he undertake to have the Minister of Transport respect that unanimous deci-

Oral Questions

sion by two committees of this House, and have the CN stop twin-tracking in that particular area of British Columbia?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to that very important question. I was unable to be in the House yesterday for the debate because I was attending a conference of provincial Transport Ministers, but I have read most of the speeches in the House yesterday. I would like to inform the Hon. Member that the Minister of Fisheries and myself will be meeting with the Allied Tribal Council of British Columbia Indians in Vancouver tomorrow to deal with this issue—I hear some yapping from the Liberal benches—and to straighten out a mess which the former Government created. I hope I have the support and confidence of at least the members of the NDP, to try to resolve this matter in a satisfactory way which will look after the concerns and wishes of the Indian people which were trampled by the Government of that Party.

● (1500)

REQUEST THAT PROJECT BE SUSPENDED

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the Minister of Transport that this mess was given to us by the former Liberal regime.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaikie: That does not prevent him from being able to act, and I hope that he will act. Will the Minister assure the House and the committees that made that decision that he will not allow CN to proceed until such time as he has arrived at an agreement which is satisfactory to all the people concerned with this, the fishermen and the native people in particular?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish the Hon. Member had listened to my answer. The reason I am going out there is to meet with the Indian people. We will be meeting with Fisheries, the Department of Indian Affairs, and all interested parties to try to resolve the issue. I note that the New Democratic Party indicated its support for the increase in rail capacity, something that the former Minister of the Environment now faces with some ambivalence. I do not know how he could have stood up in his place yesterday and played such a role of a hypocrite after presiding over this issue before.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Mazankowski: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. Speaker: Order. For some reason it is impossible to get the House to pay attention to anybody today. I must ask the Hon. Minister of Transport to withdraw the word "hypocrite". He knows it is unparliamentary.