

Oral Questions

announced it is considering leasing something like 206 separate sites on the Georges Bank, totalling 1.2 million acres of ocean, to offshore oil explorations. Of these sites 138 are very important fishing grounds and I understand 50 are spawning areas for haddock, whiting-hake, herring and yellowtail flounder. Since ownership of this bank is obviously in dispute, can the minister tell the House if any informal agreement between our two countries exists and if none does, on what basis can exploration permits be issued to oil companies probing the resources of the seas?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)): Mr. Speaker, I am more familiar with the fisheries aspect than the exploration aspect. With the hon. member's permission, I will take the question as notice.

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CAPITAL PUNISHMENT**INQUIRY IF FREE VOTE ON BILL C-84 WILL INCLUDE CABINET**

Mrs. Simma Holt (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Will the free vote on Bill C-84 be free to the cabinet?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fairweather: Otherwise, how was your caucus this morning?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a freer group of men and women still has to be found in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FINANCE**VIEW OF MR. JOHNSTONE OF THE ANTI-INFLATION BOARD ON EXCESSIVE GOVERNMENT SPENDING—MINISTERS POSITION**

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. As the executive director, Robert Johnstone of the Anti-Inflation Board is reported this week as saying that "There is a point at which high rates of increase in government spending, incurring of substantial deficits, and high rates of money growth would blow the (anti-inflation) program to smithereenes," would the minister indicate if he agrees with this view and specifically does he know of any provincial or municipal governments which are allowing such excess spending increases or deficits and if so, who are they?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, all governments in Canada are exercising restraint against increases in government expenditure and, of course the Bank of Canada has been following a tighter monetary policy which has been the subject of complaints by the hon. member because of high interest rates.

EFFORTS OF MINISTER TO REDUCE DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURES—POSSIBLE REFERENCE OF ESTIMATES TO ANTI-INFLATION BOARD

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of all governments following such restraint, and dealing with the minister's own spending estimates for salaries and related matters which we find have jumped by 15.5 per cent for the current year compared to a 9.5 per cent increase last year, would the minister indicate what steps he is taking to ensure that this 15.5 per cent estimated hike in his own spending will not materialize? Would he also explain to what extent he feels he can reduce his spending to meet at least the 9.5 per cent level of last year's increase and be within the AIB guidelines?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as usual the hon. gentleman's arithmetic is somewhat faulty. As indicated to the committee last night, of course the government is bound by the collective bargaining agreements already entered into. I am confident that the Treasury Board will be able to keep settlements with respect to the Department of Finance and other departments, well within the guidelines.

Mr. Stevens: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If the minister is so confident concerning his own arithmetic, would he be willing to refer his own estimate increases to the AIB for a ruling to decide whether the increases are within the guidelines? Also, would the minister now confirm that his budget will be brought down on May 25, so that the nation can have a look at what this relatively highly paid staff has produced?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would have no difficulty referring them but since they obviously will be within the guidelines I see no necessity for doing that. As to the date of the budget, I will be prepared to indicate that to the House next Monday.

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TRANSPORT**PURPOSE OF RELOCATION SUBSISTENCE FUND FOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS—APPLICABILITY TO ALL CONTROLLERS IN QUEBEC**

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Has the government offered to set up a linguistic relocation subsistence fund for air traffic controllers and, if so, what is the purpose of the fund?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions concerning the terms which might be available for air traffic controllers located in a control centre which is designed to become a bilingual control centre, who are unable to operate in a bilingual control atmosphere, and who will therefore seek to be relocated rather than take the necessary training. The discussions are really related to recognizing the special circumstances of the transfer involved and indeed are therefore a better condition of transfer than is available generally.