

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

BENEFIT CONTROL—ALLEGED STATEMENT BY REFEREES AS TO WITCH HUNT

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. On Monday, March 19, I asked the minister whether he would investigate a charge by Murray Tate in connection with the government's crackdown on recipients of unemployment insurance benefits. He, along with others who incidentally are on the appeal board, said there was a witch hunt in progress and that the tactics used were terrifying people. Has the minister had an opportunity to investigate this matter through his officials and, if so, what report has he received?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): There were three such instances, I believe, referred to by the hon. member. The three gentlemen named have been contacted. The files have been brought to Ottawa, are under examination now and are being referred to the advisory committee which I mentioned in my earlier reply, but the report is not complete.

Mr. Alexander: Apparently Mr. Tate has stated that the crackdown has resulted in a rotten situation, since those who belong to unions and who report to their unions have been automatically disqualified. This point was brought home to the unemployment insurance officials so that it might be rectified immediately. Is the minister aware of this situation and, if so, what action does he contemplate in order to rectify it?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, all the comments made are being investigated. I would prefer to wait for the report of the advisory committee.

Mr. Alexander: I was under the impression that the advisory committee would have reported before this. Can the minister tell us when he expects to receive the report of the advisory committee and when it will subsequently be made available to the House?

Mr. Andras: I do not yet have a precise date but we are pressing for this information to be supplied as quickly as it can be done completely.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

STATUS OF TEMBEC APPLICATION TO REOPEN MILL IN TÉMISCAMINGUE

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion arising out of the application by TEMBEC in Témiscamingue for a DREE grant to restart the plant that CIP closed down in that town. The application was made some five or six months ago. May I ask the minister what the present status of that application is?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, this has been, and continues to be, a very complex subject, but I can advise the hon.

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member and the House that I have now completed an evaluation and that a series of recommendations by me will be considered by appropriate ministers within a matter of days. I am hopeful I shall have a positive announcement to make before the end of next week.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the fact, according to information which has been sent to me, that the employees concerned have now exhausted their unemployment insurance entitlement and families are entirely without income, would the minister assure the House that a favourable decision on this application will be made and announced within days and that there will be no long delay such as we have experienced until now?

Mr. Jamieson: I am sure the hon. member will understand that I cannot give him an ironclad assurance that, in his words, a favourable decision will be made. I can assure him I will suggest that something along those lines be done. As to the second part of the question, yes, we will have an answer next week.

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FINANCE

EXCHANGE RATES—INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND COMMITTEE MEETING—CANADIAN POSITION

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. It arises out of the communiqué which he tabled on motions. On page two this statement appears:

Members of the committee recognized that exchange rates must be a matter for international concern and consultation and that in the reformed system the exchange rate regime should remain based on stable but adjustable par values.

Would the minister advise the House as to the nature of Canada's proposal with regard to a fixed rate on a rather more flexible basis? Is this the so-called creeping peg? Would the minister also tell us whether Canada was the country that insisted upon the advisability of periodic floating rates?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the communiqué goes on to say in the next sentence: "It was also recognized that floating rates could provide a useful technique in particular situations." Canada's position is that the ultimate objective of a new international monetary system should be stable but adjustable fixed rates but that in the meantime we should not ignore the recent situation in the world with a good part of the industrial complexes on a series of floats, and that we have to build up this system before achieving a new monetary order.

• (1430)

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I will refrain from saying that that is a mugwump position. However, there is the further statement that "there should be a strong presumption against the use of trade controls for balance of payments purposes." Would the minister advise the House whether United States Secretary of the Treasury Shultz subscribed to that statement, and did he