

Oral Questions

unwarranted tax, can the hon. gentleman assure the House that there will be no further increase in employer-employee contributions this year related to unemployment insurance?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I see no indication that there will be the requirement for an increase in the employer-employee premium rate this year.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

REFUSAL OF CORPORATION TO SUPPLY TRANSCRIPT OF PROGRAM "TEN LOST YEARS"

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State, the minister who answers for the CBC. It concerns the refusal of the CBC to provide me with a transcript of the audio portion of the program "Ten Lost Years" telecast on the network on Sunday night, February 2. Will the minister instruct the CBC to provide me with that transcript?

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to the corporation about this. They would be pleased to provide the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts with a full screening of that program, which the hon. member could attend.

Mr. Scott: I am not interested in the quality of the acting; I want a transcript of the words spoken on the air. I ask the minister again, will he see that I am provided with this transcript?

Mr. Faulkner: In my judgment, they go together.

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FINANCE

SALES TAX ON OLYMPIC COINS

Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct this question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that Olympic coins are considered legal tender, and since British Columbia is to my knowledge the only province charging a 5 per cent sales tax, can the minister advise the House whether the imposition of such a sales tax is legal, and if it is not, will he see that the money is paid back to the people or credited to the Olympic fund?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The rules of the question period clearly except asking a minister to give a legal opinion. The hon. member's question directly asks the minister whether the collection of the sales tax is legal, and this would appear not to be a proper question during this period. Perhaps an answer could be obtained in some other way.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I would be allowed to rephrase the question. Is the minister aware that British Columbia is charging a sales tax?

[Mr. Alexander.]

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): I will try to answer the question within the ambit of your ruling, Mr. Speaker. No tax attaches to Olympic coins which change hands at face value, but when they are sold by the banks for amounts above their face value, sales tax is applicable. Some of the provinces have agreed to waive the sales tax, but with respect to the first issue and the second issue some provinces have imposed a sales tax, including Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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● (1450)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

SALE OF PART OF HOTEL SYSTEM

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that Canadian National Railways have been carrying on discussions with the Hilton International Hotels chain and the Trizec Corporation—American and British companies, respectively—with a view to selling off a major share of the Canadian National hotel system plus other properties, may I ask the minister whether or not CNR management informed the minister or the government of their wish to do this, whether or not the government was asked for approval or for an opinion and, if not, has the minister or the government conveyed to the CNR their views on this matter? If so, what were those views?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the proposal made by Trizec, Hilton, CNR and Air Canada. The matter is under consideration now, but there is no indication that a fast decision is going to be taken on this very important matter.

Mr. Benjamin: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister has answered only part of my question. In view of the fact that this property is owned and paid for by the people of Canada and is public property, would the minister tell the House his position and the position of the government on the matter? Also, will they request or instruct Canadian National to hire management and expertise to run their hotel chain, thus retaining ownership in the hands of the Canadian public?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, most of the important airlines in the world, such as TWA, Pan American, Air France and many others, have developed some hotels all over the world. Is it a good thing for Air Canada to do the same? That is the question we are looking into. There is no doubt in my mind that CN cannot make a deal with the hotels without the approbation of the Government of Canada.