

Oral Questions

way of the state of the negotiations with the province of Quebec, considering the situation we all know? Are those negotiations carrying on normally or are there major squabbles which could delay the establishment of such a scheme?

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, I am presently carrying on the negotiations initiated by my predecessor with the provinces, and more specifically with the province of Quebec, on the proposed transfer of lump sum payments under the social services legislation as opposed to the 50/50 formula we used to know. This would parallel the lump sum payments we have already agreed on with the provinces in health matters and which seem to satisfy everybody, providing fewer administrative complications for us and more independence in the program selection for the provinces. I have nothing specific to tell about any province in particular since we are still carrying on negotiations which I feel positive.

● (1132)

[English]

ABILITY OF COUNTRY TO AFFORD GUARANTEED INCOME PLAN

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the President of the Treasury Board. We have just heard interest proclaimed by the Minister of National Health and Welfare in a guaranteed income plan or some take-off on it. Given the fact that the provinces have been very concerned about the possible administration of it, that it could be a disincentive and that it is questionable whether we can afford it, would the minister now be in a position to give us some indication as to whether he has reached any particular decision on this matter? Has he looked into it, and can we afford this year or next year even to consider it?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the latest details, so I could not make any comment of that nature.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

GOVERNMENT'S TARGET FOR GROWTH

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in the fact that the Minister of Finance is now saying we should spend more and save less. I hope this does not apply to the government front benches. Given the fact that the government indicated that it wanted to cut the growth of the civil service below one per cent and that it has grown by 2.4 per cent, adding some 14,000 to the civil service rolls, which does not indicate that there is any restraint or discipline, would the minister be in a position to indicate what his target is now with respect to the growth in the public service? Are we still looking toward a cut below one per cent in terms of growth?

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, our commitment was to contain the growth of authorized man-years in the public service under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Board to less than one per cent, and that commitment will be met.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ALLEGED DUMPING OF NICKEL BY AMEX—POSSIBILITY OF PROTEST

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, I suppose my question will have to be to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It arises from what the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have said and from what the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said this morning about the situation with regard to nickel. There is a complete misunderstanding on the part of the government of the problem which is clearly and simply the fact, not that the economies of the world are slowed down, but that Canada has gone from supplying 95 per cent of the world's nickel to 40 per cent. I would like a very specific answer to this question. Has the minister's department protested to GATT, as it may do, about the fact, as asserted by the Minister of Finance on Friday, that one of the reasons Canada is losing its share is that dumping by other countries, and particularly a firm called AMEX, is taking place? Under GATT there does not have to be dumping into our country, but if we think there is dumping, we can protest. Has the department officially protested to GATT in order to protect our share of the market in the world of nickel, which could provide the employment we are trying to get?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the preamble to his question. I will not argue with him about the share of the market we are receiving. However, I do think that there are a couple of other considerations, and I am sure he would agree, if there was time to discuss them. On the specifics of his question, we are examining now whether a legal case exists for us to make such a representation. An examination of the AMEX proposal is now going on, and if in fact there is a technique or a means by which a formal representation can be made to GATT, this will be done.

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EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

EFFECT OF LOANS TO DEVELOP RESOURCES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In its operation of the Export Development Corporation and in its foreign trade activities, is it the position of the government that the government is properly