

reviewing every method to attempt to conserve petroleum and natural gas resources in this country.

Mr. Fraser: Would the minister, with his other colleagues, please consider the discriminatory effect of this tax on small boat owners and private aircraft owners as opposed to the great many other uses to which the gasoline engine is put in this country, keeping in mind the relatively small amount of fuel consumed in this area?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): This matter, of course, was debated thoroughly in committee of the whole when the bills pursuant to the November budget were before the committee. The hon. member will recall that the scope of the tax was reduced as a result of those committee discussions.

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● (1140)

OLYMPIC GAMES

POSSIBLE MINTING OF COMMEMORATIVE GOLD COINS— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. As actual net proceeds derived from the sales of Olympic stamps and coins on March 31, 1975, totalled only \$22.3 million, far below the projected ultimate \$260 million, as only one year is left before the Olympics and as the shortfall is likely to add even more to the already exorbitant deficit Montreal faces, can the minister advise this House if the cabinet has decided to supplement the existing program, perhaps by minting a gold coin piece or by some other ways and means, and will the government be introducing legislation to this effect?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the government is considering the requests of COJO to find procedures to increase revenues. As soon as the decision of the cabinet is taken, we will probably be introducing legislation in the House in the near future.

[English]

MINTING OF COMMEMORATIVE GOLD COINS BY HAITI— INQUIRY WHETHER PERMISSION SOUGHT

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As Haiti has minted and is now marketing Olympic gold coins of its own honouring the Montreal Olympics, will the minister advise the House if the government of Haiti approached the government of Canada for permission to mint such coins; was such permission given, and, if not, what assurances can be given that these coins will not find their way to markets where they will compete directly with our own fund raising coin projects?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether a request was made to mint foreign coins for the Olympics. Evidently if this affects the positions of COJO, we will take the necessary steps. But to my knowledge, no permission was granted in that connection.

Oral Questions

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

PROJECTION OF BENEFIT PAYMENTS TO END OF 1975— POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and has to do with the state of the unemployment insurance fund. Has the minister seen recent forecasts which project to the end of 1975 payments which will be made out of the fund in 1975, and has consideration been given to extending benefits to those workers whose benefits will run out and who therefore will be deprived of UIC pay.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in another place the other day I indicated possible benefit pay-outs in 1975 at various levels of unemployment and took into consideration the other factors, such as duration of unemployment, duration of benefits, wage rates, and so on. To answer the second part of the hon. member's question, no decision has been taken to extend benefits. In fact, the extension of benefits would require amendments to the act.

POSSIBILITY GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO ACCOUNT WILL EXCEED AMOUNT IN MAIN ESTIMATES—REQUEST FOR ESTIMATE OF AMOUNT

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration? Noting that the conference board rather conservatively estimates that the unemployment rate will rise to 7.8 per cent by the end of the year and that benefit payments are already running at a 29 per cent higher rate in the first quarter of this year than in the first quarter of last, I ask if the minister is now prepared to concede that the government's contribution to the unemployment insurance account will have to exceed considerably the \$864 million forecast in the main estimates for 1975-76?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my reply to a similar question the other day, the hon. member, with respect, does not understand the operation of the fund. The \$890 million-odd in the main estimates for 1975-76 represents the amount calculated as being required to repay the advance made in 1974, that is, to repay the government's share of costs for meeting 1974 benefit payments. There will not be any requirement for additional funds for that item in the main estimates.

Mr. Oberle: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister prepared to give a rough estimate of the previous year's requirements; that is, is he prepared to give a rough estimate of the cash drain on the government during this fiscal year which is resulting from its contributions to the unemployment insurance fund. Obviously, the minister needs the money this year, even though he is to include it in the estimates next year.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I indicated the other day in another place when answering questions about various