

NATIONAL DEFENCE

POSSIBLE CHANGE IN PRIORITY FOR NATO FORCES

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Acting Prime Minister. In a recent announcement, the Minister of National Defence seemed to recommend a priority in defence spending for the acquisition of a new tank for the Canadian forces in NATO. If this is so, does it indicate a reversal of priorities announced by the Prime Minister some time ago which put the defence of Canadian sovereignty first and the support of Canada's NATO forces third in priority?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, there has been no change in priorities. Even under the priorities which were established and still remain, it will be necessary to do something about the equipment of our troops in NATO.

POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF TANKS FOR NATO FORCES—EFFECT ON ACQUISITION OF LONG-RANGE PATROL AIRCRAFT

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Defence. Assuming that spending priority is given to the purchase of NATO tanks, would this mean that the necessary funds to acquire the Boeing long range patrol aircraft would have to come from some department other than the Department of National Defence, and would the alternative acquisition of the cheaper Lockheed Orion have a capability for anti-submarine defence only and no adequate capability for fisheries and sovereignty patrol?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as the Acting Prime Minister has said, our priorities remain as in the white paper of 1971. Our procurement decisions are now before cabinet. I expect to be making an announcement probably next week, but before going to Brussels in December, of the decisions we have made concerning a long range patrol aircraft and the re-equipping of our forces in Europe. This announcement will answer the questions that have been put.

I could go into a great deal of detail concerning the two aircraft that are in competition. They are both capable of performing the role but there are some industrial benefits that may be achieved which are currently being examined interdepartmentally. The conclusion will be reflected in the announcement next week.

* * *

LABOUR CONDITIONS

STRIKE OF PULP AND PAPER WORKERS—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ENSURE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Ed Lumley (Stormont-Dundas): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. I am sure the minister is well aware that almost 20,000 pulp and paper workers across Canada are out of work due to labour disputes, some entering their fifth month. In view of the importance to the Canadian economy of the pulp and paper industry, what action does the government plan to take to

Oral Questions

encourage both parties to begin serious bargaining in good faith?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned, this Anti-Inflation legislation is not designed to discourage the collective bargaining system from working within the parameters set by the legislation. We hope that the employers in question will sit down with the union, which has asked that negotiations be started and that they will keep the legislation in mind. This is what the government is urging the employers to do in this particular case, so that hopefully we can resolve this very serious strike which is most injurious to the Canadian economy.

* * *

POST OFFICE

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING PICK UP AND DELIVERY SERVICE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Postmaster General may I direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the fact that government employees are being sent to pick up federal sales tax payments from businesses in some areas, would the government consider establishing a similar pick up and delivery service for accounts due to small businesses so they will have the funds on hand to meet their obligations to the government and others?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): To that specific suggestion, Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. Various groups are making their own arrangements and the government is not discouraging them.

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—ACCEPTANCE BY GOVERNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOSSES CAUSED BY STRIKE

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the government accept responsibility for financial loss caused by the postal strike and set up a claims agency or department to provide payments to business establishments that have suffered greatly through this strike?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That question was answered yesterday.

* * *

CENTRAL MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

SUGGESTION CORPORATION NOT SELECT LAWYERS FOR MORTGAGORS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. Would the minister now recognize, as have all ministers responsible for Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation before him, that it is morally wrong for a government agency to select the lawyers who do the work for the mortgagors, and will he bring CMHC up to the