

*Oral Questions*

"assured mail" has not been used since 1976. If the hon. member for Don Valley has some allegation he wishes to make I wish he would make it to me because I have not seen any advertizing of the type he mentioned used since 1976. But the proportion of this mail delivered the next day is 85 per cent on the national average and delivery by the next day but one is short only 2 per cent, so it is 98 per cent for the next day plus one.

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**FINANCE****POSSIBLE USE OF FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT TO SET TAX RATES**

**Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford):** In light of the minister's positive response to my last question I would like to direct my supplementary to the Minister of Finance. Section 13 of the Financial Administration Act states a minister can prescribe a rate for any service by regulation and since the government provides many services to Canadians, could the hon. gentleman tell the House if he intends to follow the trend set by the Postmaster General and bring in future tax provisions by regulation?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance):** The opposition makes an interesting recommendation but I do not think I could accept it.

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**ENERGY****POSSIBILITY OF TRANSPORTING ALASKAN OIL BY PIPELINE OR RAILWAY—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

**Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster):** May I address a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Mr. Speaker? It concerns the continuing threat of pollution to the southern offshore waters of British Columbia following the decision by Kitimat to withdraw its application for permission to construct a pipeline. Can the minister tell us whether his department has given any serious consideration by way of a study into transportation by Canada of Alaska oil overland either by pipeline or by rail? Would he advise us whether the decision by the Hall Commission to recommend rail as a form of transportation in these circumstances and the Queen's University study which similarly recommended rail have been co-related into a study of an alternative route for Alaskan oil over British Columbia or thereabouts so that we might avoid the hazards of water transportation in our coastal waters?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** When the United States government made the decision to go the Alyeska route, as far as Canada was concerned, it ruled out the possibility of moving Prudhoe Bay oil across Canada.

[Mr. Blais.]

**Mr. Leggatt:** So that the minister might understand more particularly, might I say that a rail connection to Alaska would connect the whole of northern British Columbia and Alaska with both the Canadian trans-continental system and the United States trans-continental system and would also complete the British Columbia railroad to the north.

● (1440)

The reason I ask whether serious consideration has been given to this is that the government has known for a very long time that the risk of pollution as a result of the presence of oil tankers off our shores is great. What I want the minister to advise us is whether he or his department have made any positive proposal to the U.S. government, either in terms of an alternate oil port or in terms of land transportation. What have we proposed to the Americans to avoid the dead certainty of pollution of British Columbia waters so that they would have an option that would be acceptable to Canada?

**Mr. Gillespie:** As the hon. member knows, the government is not in a position to make a proposal to the United States with respect to an oil pipeline from Alaska through British Columbia, if that is the suggestion he is making. The National Energy Board was set up by parliament to consider, upon application from various companies, as to whether or not a certificate of public convenience and necessity could be issued. Clearly the initiative with respect to such a move would have to come from a group of corporations in the private sector, which application would then have to be heard by the National Energy Board to determine whether it is in the national interest that a certificate be issued.

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**POST OFFICE****MEASURES TO ASSURE SERVICE IN VIEW OF POSSIBILITY OF STRIKE**

**Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to the Postmaster General. In very combative replies today, without giving much information, the Postmaster General has refused to publish studies that have been conducted into the effectiveness of the Post Office; he has rejected either a joint parliamentary inquiry into the operations of the Post Office or a royal commission, and he has publicly attacked CUPW. We know what he is against, we know what he is not prepared to do, but what we are interested in knowing is what he is doing and what he intends to do to ensure that Canadians receive mail after June 30 and that there is an improvement in the Canadian postal services now. Can he tell us positively what he is doing, and can he give us a guarantee that there will be a new contract signed before June 30 or on June 30?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, surely that last request is not serious, or else the hon. gentleman is showing a greater naiveté than has been attributed to him. I would simply indicate to him that we are doing our best,