

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SHIPPING

COASTING TRADE—PRESENTATION OF BILL BASED ON
DARLING REPORT

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

Does he intend to introduce a piece of legislation in order to implement the recommendations made in the Darling report of 1970 concerning the coasting trade in Canada which was to be reserved to ships flying the Canadian flag?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I hope the cabinet will shortly spell out the Canadian government policy on this matter.

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[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

INQUIRY AS TO DEFICIT WHEN GOVERNOR GENERAL'S
WARRANTS USED

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In light of the fact the Unemployment Insurance Act has a statutory limit of \$800 million, can the minister advise the House whether or not he was running at a deficit in the months of September and October when he applied for the first Governor General's warrant?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would want legal advice as to what the definition of deficit is with regard to that question before I could answer.

An hon. Member: You sure need it.

Mr. Andras: I am not trying to evade answering, I am simply trying to understand exactly the terminology the hon. member is using so I can respond.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can help the minister. All I am trying to find out is whether in fact the government had spent the \$800 million set out in the statute at the time the minister's department applied for a Governor General's warrant? That is a simple question.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, the \$800 million ceiling was to apply to advances to the Unemployment Insurance Commission in order to fund it pending receipt of employer and employee contributions and pending the determination of the government's cost of unemployment insurance benefits in excess of 4 per cent. Those figures are not determinable in total until about April of the next year. The advances did in the end exceed the \$800 million statutory ceiling and we sought Governor General's warrants for that purpose.

Mr. Baldwin: Illegally.

Mr. Alexander: I am glad the minister is now letting the secrets out of the bag. Will the minister advise now wheth-

[Mr. Speaker.]

er in fact the premiums set for employers and employees were sufficient to take up the cost of the program as of December 31?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that employee-employer premiums for last year were in fact insufficient to fund the employee-employer charges to that portion of the fund, and I announced that information in December.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Alexander: I have one last supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has asked three supplementary questions on the same subject. I will recognize him for a last supplementary and then recognize the hon. member for Yukon, but we will have to try to make some headway.

Mr. Alexander: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Because of the importance of the matter I know the House would want me to elicit all the information possible.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: Will the minister answer this question: Does the amount that he has requested by way of Governor General's warrants cover all costs up to December 31 or is he now preparing further estimates in respect of further costs?

Mr. Stanfield: He needs legal advice before he answers that.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I think I would like to examine that question—

Mr. Hees: I think you had better examine your whole department.

Mr. Andras:—extremely carefully and get expert advice and not attempt to offer information which may not be complete.

Mr. Alexander: Just let the record show that the fund is in terrible shape.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

REQUEST FOR TABELING OF GOVERNOR GENERAL'S
WARRANTS PROVIDING ADDITIONAL FUNDS

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the President of the Treasury Board. Since the matter will perhaps be referred to the committee and since the warrants of which we have been speaking have not been tabled in the House—I realize the government has 15 days from the commencement of the session within which to do this—will the minister see to it that the warrants are tabled on Monday so members can have full information?