Oral Questions

ENERGY

PROPOSED ENRICHED URANIUM PLANT AT JAMES BAY—POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND FRENCH INTERIOR MINISTER

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. In his meetings later this week with French Interior Minister Poniatowski, is the subject of a proposed enriched uranium plant in the James Bay area on the agenda for discussion?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Not in so far as my discussions with the minister are concerned. I am meeting the minister next week on only one occasion, I believe, at a luncheon, but I rather imagine that the subject can come up at meetings with other ministers. I know that the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has been discussing this question recently with the Quebec minister of industry.

PROPOSED ENRICHED URANIUM PLANT AT JAMES BAY—GOVERNMENT POSITION FOLLOWING FEASIBILITY STUDY

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): My supplementary question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the fact that the minister said on June 10 that he would be meeting with the Quebec minister of industry in the first week of July to discuss the feasibility report of the Canadif project, and that the federal government has a role of prime importance in this matter, would the minister say if he is now prepared to give the federal government's position on this issue?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I met with Mr. St. Pierre yesterday. We had both received from the James Bay Corporation a copy of the feasibility study and we noted that the study had not addressed itself to a number of questions, including the ones to which I have made reference in the House which we think are most important in that regard. Federal officials will meet with Quebec officials, I think, in about three weeks' time to make a further examination of the question and to see whether it would be desirable from the standpoint of Quebec and of the federal government to have more elaborate studies made of this proposal.

Miss MacDonald: I have one final supplementary question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the gravity of this matter with regard to the export of a nuclear substance, would the minister undertake to report to the House on any discussions that take place with the French interior minister regarding an enriched uranium plant and make clear once and for all the federal government's position on this matter?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I am not anticipating meeting the French interior minister and I cannot report on discussions that other hon. members may have.

[Mr. MacEachen.]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

REASON FOR DELAY IN RATIFICATION OF GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. The once prosperous province of British Columbia has had a 50 per cent increase in unemployment in the last year. At the same time it is impossible to obtain DREE grants or loans in many high unemployment areas. There appears to be a hold-up in the ratification of a general development agreement. Can the minister tell the House who or what is stopping the DREE programs in British Columbia?

Some hon. Members: Barrett.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member would not wish me to get involved in the first part of his question. It is unfortunate that the jobless rate in British Columbia has gone up, but that, of course, is not our responsibility.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jamieson: In so far as trying to alleviate that situation is concerned, I have been holding discussions with Mr. Lauk, the B.C. minister of industrial development. We have a number of proposals which I have outlined earlier in the House. The first of these should be ready for submission to the federal Treasury Board some time in the month of July. I mentioned earlier that it had to do with infrastructure support in northern British Columbia. There are two other areas in which we are engaged, namely, some development with regard to certain of the coal field areas in that part of British Columbia, and also an incentives program relating to certain parts of the lumber industry within British Columbia. These are moving ahead. I am not sure that I could attribute blame for the slowness to any one particular place. I can only say to the hon. member that I hope we can move as fast as possible.

● (1440)

REASON FOR LACK OF UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR CAPITAL REGION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): I was asking earlier about a general agreement. It might be beneficial for the minister responsible for DREE if Statistics Canada were to provide more detailed figures on unemployment in British Columbia. Can the minister explain to the House why there are no unemployment statistics for the capital region district, which contains some 220,000 people?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): If that part of the question is directed to me, I am afraid I cannot give an offhand answer, but I will refer it to the appropriate minister, and we will see what we can do by way of obtaining an explanation. Hon. members opposite were most emphatic in insisting that DREE assistance should not be provided in the lower mainland area of British Columbia.