

Oral Questions

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF EXEMPTIONS FROM WAGE GUIDELINES

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. The white paper provides within it certain exemptions for wage contracts, one being historical relationships and the other contracts signed prior to January 1, 1974. Will the minister clarify whether they are all or nothing exemptions. In other words, will a contract be totally exempt or not exempt or will the board have the discretion to give partial settlements above the guidelines but below any agreed or negotiated settlement?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most helpful way to answer the question is to point out the difference in terminology. The white paper does not indicate exemptions. What it does indicate is that the Anti-Inflation Board may take account of special circumstances and may decide, notwithstanding the guidelines, that those special circumstances dictate different treatment. Having put it in that context, I think it will be obvious to the hon. member that the board can determine that the different treatment might be to go totally to whatever the negotiated level is or to some intermediate range. It is totally the discretion of the board, not only as to whether it should depart from the guidelines, but how far they should depart.

Mr. Leggatt: In view of the discretion the board will apparently have, will the government give consideration to the fact that where the board decides to grant a partial settlement, a strike may result following that with both the employer and employee agreeing there will be a strike, not against the employer, but against the government, similar to the post office situation? Was that possibility given consideration in terms of the mechanics of the legislation?

● (1150)

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I do not know that I would agree with the hon. gentleman's analysis. The strike, after all, is against the employer. The full range of economic pressures which can be brought to bear on an employer, namely a withdrawal of services, still exists under either the provincial or the federal law, as I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition. Therefore, I do not think the hon. gentleman's analysis is correct.

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AIR CANADA

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF ESTEY REPORT—SUGGESTION COMPANY OFFICIALS APPEAR BEFORE COMMITTEE

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Since it appears that he has the Estey report in his hands at the present time, can he inform the House when the report will be translated, if it has to be, and when it will be

[Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent).]

tabled in the House of Commons so that the Canadian public can see what the report contains?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give any precise timing for the publication of the report. It is a very lengthy one and therefore translation and printing will take a considerable period of time. I would not want at this point to give a rough estimate of how long.

Mr. Murta: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I have an assurance from the Minister of Transport that when the Estey report is translated and made public, hopefully as soon as possible, the government will agree to allow officials of Air Canada to be brought before parliament for a thorough investigation of the air line?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the intention certainly is to ask parliament for a very full examination of the issues involved. Indeed, I want to assure hon. members that in the interval between receipt of the report and its publication the government will be taking certain action which will permit the putting of proposals before parliament.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

UNITED NATIONS FORCE IN MIDDLE EAST—POSSIBILITY OF REQUEST FOR INCREASED CANADIAN COMMITMENT

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Following yesterday's security council vote regarding the United Nations force in the Middle East and also the requirement for augmented forces consequent upon the Egyptian-Israeli Sinai agreement, can the minister indicate whether a request has come to Canada for an increased commitment to this force, can he indicate the response to such request and what is to be the extent and type of our enlarged involvement?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there has been no formal request from the United Nations for an enlargement of our contribution to the emergency force.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ALLEGED UNION POLICY NOT TO ASSIST IN DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Has the minister had any indication that members of the public service alliance in UIC offices are bound by union policy and are not prepared to assist in the distribution of UIC payments? If this is the case, what steps is the minister's department taking to have UIC payments distributed to Canada's many unemployed?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have had no indication of this in any information I have at this moment. I hope this