

S.O. 22

papermill which could be the final achievement of this infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, they have set their hearts on this project which would make possible for people in the area to earn a decent living and would consolidate a few thousand jobs. We know that this project is now being discussed by the Quebec Government, private investors and sometimes the federal Government.

But the Government of Canada apparently has been dragging its feet. People from the area are presently in Ottawa to sensitize all Members of Parliament to the importance of this project for the Gaspé-Lower St. Lawrence area.

Mr. Speaker, I dare hope that they will return home with the commitment that the project will become a reality with the co-operation of both levels of government. That is why I ask all Hon. Members to make representations to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, to make sure that this very important project for the economic development of the Gaspé area is supported by the Government and that the Matane area gets its papermill.

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[English]

INSURANCE

LACK OF REINSURANCE FACILITY IN CANADA

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis in the property and casualty insurance industry making it virtually impossible for Canadian business, municipalities, boards of education, hospitals, truckers, and others, to obtain liability insurance at realistic cost.

Liability insurance is essential to the smooth running of our society. The problem is that the property and casualty insurance industry in Canada is fragmented. There are literally hundreds of companies, some with minimal capitalization, and the reinsurance industry, with very few exceptions, is almost totally foreign. Because of the poor financial performance of the property and casualty industry caused by outrageously low premiums and a bad claims record, the international reinsurance industry refuses to stand behind the needs of Canadian property and casualty insurance companies.

France faced this problem, and the French organized a reinsurance company to provide the reinsurance required. We can do the same thing.

I call upon the Government to get together immediately with leading insurance companies to set up a new reinsurance facility in Canada and that, at the outset, the Government, if necessary, and then only for a short time, take a piece of the responsibility so that reinsurance will be available and so that the distress, caused by the lack of ability to find liability coverage, will be alleviated.

The matter is urgent. Trade is affected. Municipalities are hampered. School boards are damaged. Indeed, our way of life is threatened.

● (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

AIRPORTS

INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister would care to enlighten the House, and the country, on the reason for the extra security at major Canadian international airports. And would he be in a position to give some assurance to those planning air travel?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there was stepped up security at some Canadian airports after the RCMP received a threat—so far unsubstantiated—that there was a security threat against an aircraft at the Ottawa International Airport and the travelling public. A joint RCMP-Ottawa Police investigation, in co-operation with other police forces, continues, and the increased airport security will continue until that investigation is complete. Further comment right now could jeopardize the investigation and I would not want to interfere with the work of the police, nor would I want to arouse public anxiety unduly.

INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS INQUIRY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, without trespassing upon the last words of the Deputy Prime Minister, would he be in a position to advise the House whether there are any international implications?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): I am in no position to make such a confirmation, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT'S KNOWLEDGE OF SECURITY THREAT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, would the Deputy Prime Minister favour the House with the information as to how long the Government has known about this particular threat and how long he anticipates the additional security might last?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I believe that a response specifically to that question might be harmful to the investigation itself and might arouse that anxiety which I hope could be