

Oral Questions

Canadian government and the authorities who introduced the bill, they were not formal; however the American authorities are well aware of the Canadian point of view on the possibility of increasing supertanker traffic in the Juan de Fuca Strait, and that we have insisted for a long time that another port should be chosen for oil delivery.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question.

Since the Washington State Oceanographic Commission has considered some locations for the delivery of crude oil from Alaska, but only those in the Juan de Fuca Strait, and has until now made no recommendation in that regard, how can the minister believe that the study of alternative locations may prevent environmental damage in the Juan de Fuca Strait and on the coast of British Columbia?

Mrs. Sauv : Mr. Speaker, the oceanographic institute, as the hon. member said, studied several possible locations for oil delivery ports in western Canada. The studies were not limited to the ports which are located in the Juan de Fuca Strait. I know for certain that other places on the coast have been considered, but due to the topography and especially to the streams that are found on that coastline, the establishment of superports for oil tankers in that area would present huge problems. The proposed location of Port Angeles has the advantage of being closer to the entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait.

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[English]

FINANCE**REASON INTEREST RATES PERMITTED TO RISE—POSSIBLE STABILIZING EFFECT ON CANADIAN DOLLAR**

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. While the minister was away, his colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, expressed concern over the recent rapid increase in mortgage rates and resolved to speak to the minister about it upon his return. Can the minister tell the House whether this important conversation has taken place, and can he clarify for the House the government interpretation as to why short term interest rates in general, and mortgage rates in particular, are being allowed to rise at a time when the minister is attempting to stimulate the economy?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet had an opportunity to talk with my esteemed colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. I hope to shortly. With regard to mortgage rates, hopefully that might reflect some upturn in the market and pressure on it.

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Does the minister endorse the Bank of Canada's policy of raising interest rates in order to stabilize the decline of the Canadian dollar?

[Mrs. Sauv .]

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the assumption on which the question is based. Therefore, I am not going to comment on it.

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PUBLIC WORKS**DREDGING—SUGGESTED FORMATION OF CROWN CORPORATION**

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works. In view of the fact the government owns 20 or more dredging rigs, will it consider the formation of a crown corporation to compete with the private sector of the dredging industry to give the government a monitoring position and, in effect, establish a reserve bid system?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, possession and operation of dredging equipment by the Department of Public Works does not, in effect, establish the kind of experienced performance that the hon. member is seeking. I do not think that converting this to a Crown corporation would improve the situation at the present time.

Mr. Baldwin: Bring back Hal Banks to run it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CRIMINAL CODE**SUGGESTED REFERENDUM ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT**

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister. It has to do with the lead off question on capital punishment. Will the government consider a national referendum on the abolition or retention of capital punishment prior to 1977 or prior to the next federal election?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. The government has no such intention.

Mr. Paproski: Surely the people of Canada should be allowed a little bit of input on this very important question before the next federal election.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, at every general election, the people of this country have some input. The last time they elected a majority of Liberals.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!