

Oral Questions

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the budget for fisheries patrolling was reduced this year, despite the rising costs of fuel, and this would automatically reduce the amount of patrolling that can be done. Does the minister deny there will be a curtailment of patrolling on the west coast?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): I neither deny nor confirm it. I simply say that no decision has been made. The salmon season is ending and we are reviewing all our expenditures because of obvious pressures in relation to inflation and the costs of contracts with crews as well as the cost of fuel. But no decision has been made. We are reviewing this matter and patrolling is continuing on both coasts.

* * *

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR ESTIMATE OF BUDGET REQUIRED TO ADMINISTER PROGRAM AND NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance who said during his speech on the introduction of the white paper and the bill dealing with inflation that he, his department and the anti-inflation review board expect to be confronted with perplexing questions. I wonder if it has been possible for his department to deal with the perplexing question of how many employees will be required to administer the program and what kind of budget has been established for carrying out the duties of the board.

● (1440)

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we are currently looking at the prospect of approximately 200 employees with direct responsibility here. The level of the budget is not final since it is not yet clear as to whether some of the employees will be seconded and therefore referred from other departments or brought into the public service. Obviously, the preference would be not to increase the budget by any substantial degree.

ENERGY**OIL—SALE PRICE OF OIL DISCOVERED ON CAMERON ISLAND—ACTION TO ENSURE NORTHERN OIL REACHES CANADIAN MARKET**

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Is the government contemplating allowing the oil discovered on Cameron Island to be sold at world prices, as requested by the president of Panarctic?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the government has made it quite clear in the past that the policy of the government would be that oil prices would move up towards world prices.

[Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent).]

Mr. Gillies: Given the fact that the president of Panarctic has said that there is no way in which this oil could be brought into the Canadian market unless it is at world prices, what alternative position will the government offer in order that this oil may be available to Canadian consumers?

Mr. Gillespie: One can only hope that the Panarctic discovery will lead to many more, and that there will be a sufficient reserve of oil to exploit.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gillespie: Hon. members opposite do not take this very seriously. I do; I think it is very important.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gillies: I would indicate to the minister that we take this terribly seriously, and we are concerned that there has been no conservation of Canadian oil and nothing done to increase the supply of oil. Again I ask the minister, what he will do to ensure that this oil does in fact reach the Canadian market, and I hope that he will refrain from frivolous statements.

Mr. Gillespie: We have made it very clear in the past that there are many measures we are taking. One of the more important measures is to find ways of moving that oil and gas out of the Arctic. My department has taken this position with regard to the Polar gas project with a view to determining the feasibility of moving petroleum products out of the north.

* * *

[Translation]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**INQUIRY AS TO RELEASE OF MR. AND MRS. JOHNSON, PRISONERS OF WAR IN VIET NAM**

Mr. Maurice Dupras (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, since the Secretary of State for External Affairs is not in the House, I would like to direct a question to his parliamentary secretary.

Could the parliamentary secretary reassure the House on the fate of the Canadian missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, from Hamilton? Are the reports that those two missionaries would be released true?

Miss Monique Bégin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the hon. member who just asked this question that the representations made by the Canadian authorities seem to have got a very positive ending. I am told that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, according to an official communication addressed to our Peking embassy by the Provisional Revolutionary Government, will be released. Furthermore, I would like to add that we have already been in touch with the High Commission for Refugees in Geneva and that there is no new development yet regarding the release date.