

Oral Questions

commitment of the government to that meeting. He will explore the positions of other governments.

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THE BUDGET**REASON FOR DELAY IN PRESENTATION**

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo-Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance regarding the advice he is getting. In light of the fact that the financial and economic police program of the Department of Finance has a budget in excess of \$16 million and employs almost 700 people, will the minister explain why his department cannot provide him with sufficient advice and data for an earlier budget, and why he has to wait for the GNP figures at the end of the month?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I did not give as a reason for delaying the budget the fact of having to wait for GNP figures. I spelled out the reasons in full for the hon. member for York-Simcoe on Friday.

Mr. Saltsman: Mr. Speaker, could the minister explain why the budget is being delayed to that date, because this does not give the country much time to consider its implications, and does not give parliament very much time for a budget debate?

An hon. Member: You have all summer.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. My distinct impression is that the Minister of Finance just said he has already given an answer to the question as to why the budget will be coming down on June 23. If the hon. member has another supplementary question he might want to put it now.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**REQUEST FOR REPORT ON EFFECT OF INDUSTRIAL WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY ON CANADA'S COMPETITIVE POSITION**

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo-Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Finance now in a position to present some information for which I asked him regarding wage increases in certain industries and their effect on our competitive position and productivity? He said he would table that information at the appropriate time. In view of the delayed budget and the relatively short period of time there will be to examine it, it would be very useful if the minister could present that information at an early date. Has he collected this information in respect of industrial wages, productivity and how this affects our competitive position, and will he make it available immediately?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will have to check my response to the hon. gentleman, as I do not think I gave him an undertaking to table that information. I will look at exactly what I did say. I think I said I would take his request under consideration, and I will still do that.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**REASON FOR REMOVAL OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not able to give the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion notice of this question. Recently the financial support which was given jointly by the provincial and federal governments to the Rural Development Council of Prince Edward Island was removed. Was this done with the prior knowledge of the minister or at his request?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I can say quite specifically that it certainly was not with any prior personal knowledge. Whether there were any discussions with any of my officials I am not sure. I received two wires and a letter today making representations in this regard. They were on my desk when I arrived. I have asked that there be a thorough examination to let me know what the background is.

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PUBLIC SERVICE**SHIP REPAIR UNIT—REQUEST FOR EQUAL PAY FOR EMPLOYEES IN ATLANTIC REGION**

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board, or, in his absence, to the acting and I hope activated minister. It arises by reason of the fact that negotiations and conciliation proceedings have broken off between the board and the ship bargaining unit for Esquimalt and Halifax, as noted by the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich last Thursday. Since the strike vote will be taken June 3, and since the price spread is \$1.05 per hour, will the acting minister or the minister try to hold at least that line for Atlantic workers who are very restive in respect of equal pay? I might indicate that the conciliator, Mr. O'Connor, agrees with me.

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, while the views of the conciliator are not binding, the views of Mr. O'Connor are always taken into account.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH BRITISH COLUMBIA FOR PROJECTS**

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Kootenay): Mr. Speaker, with the publication of the December and January list of accepted DREE offers, a check of which indicates none from British Columbia, would the Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion indicate the state of negotiations with the provincial government toward enlarging the areas in that province that are to be designated?