

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

OVERSEAS SERVICE—FINANCIAL NEEDS OF FAMILIES

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence. I am concerned about the special circumstances of Armed Forces families who must move frequently and face new expenses, including expenses related to spouses seeking new employment, their eligibility for unemployment insurance, and the existence of exchange rates in West Germany, for example.

Can the Minister tell us what the Department is doing or is contemplating doing to meet the special financial needs of the families serving in Canada's Armed Forces?

Hon. Paul Dick (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Armed Forces personnel who move overseas are already given a foreign service premium. There is a cost of living allowance which is indexed to the local economy in which they are living, there is a shelter share in which the Department subsidizes the housing utility costs, and there is a living-out allowance for single persons who wish to live off a base.

As a result of the differentiation between the mark and the Canadian dollar, last year we increased the amount they were allowed for living off the base in rental accommodation to try to make it more equitable for them.

● (1450)

We continue to analyze any fluctuations in the exchange rate to see if this fairness can be maintained.

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RAILWAYS

CARRIAGE OF DANGEROUS GOODS STUDY—RELEASE OF MINORITY REPORT

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Transport who, regrettably, might be the Acting Prime Minister. Residents of Toronto are still waiting for the result of a study into the rail carriage of dangerous goods, a study that was undertaken because of the near disaster in Mississauga. The minority report which is dated today and was just released by Harold Morrison, gives a behind the scenes insight into the pro railway bias of the majority of the task force, and reveals that the majority report does not recommend reduced speeds.

Today I want to call on the Acting Minister to release the majority report and, at the same time, indicate that in spite of that report reduced speeds will be imposed on the carriage of dangerous goods by rail through Metro Toronto.

Oral Questions

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all Members would regret that a member of the committee would release a minority report before the main report has even been tabled with the Minister. We have not yet received that report, but I can assure the Member that when it is tabled, which I understand will be in the next few weeks, it will be dealt with properly by the Minister and in a way that I think will be satisfactory to the vast bulk of Members here.

MAJORITY REPORT

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Parliamentary Secretary. Does the Government intend to hold on to that report until it makes its own conclusions or, as I have urged, will that report be released as soon as the Government receives it?

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it will be dealt with like all reports. The Minister will have to study it and make his own personal consultations with people with whom he thinks he should touch base. He will make a recommendation to the Cabinet and it will then come to the House in that way.

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ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT OF HYDROGEN TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, today the Agriculture Ministers are meeting to consider the tragic consequences of an historic drought. As questions today indicate, we are immersed in a controversy over the diversion of Great Lake waters. This is an indication of the tremendous perils that the greenhouse effect presents to mankind if we do not wean ourselves from carbon based fuels. Yet since 1984 the Government has cut expenditures on alternative fuels and energy conservation. It has yet to respond to the proposal by its advisory committee that Canada establish world leadership in the development of hydrogen technology.

My question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. When will the Government respond to the proposal that Canada make a significant contribution to the attack on the greenhouse effect by developing technology for substitution of hydrogen for carbon? When will it correct its error on cutting back in energy alternative expenditures?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Science and Technology)): Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Hon. Member is merely responding to action the Government has already taken in a number of these areas. In fact the Prime Minister raised the issue during the summit conference in Toronto, offering Canada to take a leadership role in co-ordinating the activities