

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

REASON FOR DELAY IN NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS WITH THE PROVINCES

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

Since Quebec and British Columbia complain about the length of time his department is taking before concluding regional economic development agreements related to particular projects in the two provinces, can the minister explain the reasons for this delay and the nature of problems delaying the signature of such agreements?

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I would not want to go into the details of small difficulties that can arise during our negotiations, because that would take too much of our time, but I can say to the hon. member that at last two agreements have been signed recently with the British Columbia government. Another one will probably be signed and announced in the very near future, and I hope that discussions going on on two other very important matters for the British Columbia economic development will be concluded within the next few weeks and that we will be able to announce the signature of another agreement in this field.

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILL PROCEED WITH QUEBEC PROJECTS AGREED TO BEFORE NOVEMBER 15

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, in view of the reservations and objections the legislative programs of the independentist government of Quebec have given rise to throughout the country, can the minister tell the House whether all the projects his department was engaged in prior to November 15 last in Quebec are being pursued according to the original time table and whether their respective budgets are being spent without restrictions?

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House and the hon. member that the programs we had undertaken with the provincial government prior to last November's election are being implemented as planned, except for very few minor details which have nothing to do with the change of government. Minor adjustments, we always run into in developing and implementing those agreements with the various provincial governments. In short, no major changes or problems have developed in the application of the current programs with the province of Quebec.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, if I understood the minister correctly, he indicated to the House that some agreements involve problems. Can the minister be specific about those?

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Mr. Lessard: Mr. Speaker, no: I did not say there were problems. In every agreement, a provision allows for adjustments in the sense that for instance, the two governments agree to do certain things under a secondary agreement and it is understood that in the course of its implementation, at the request of the provincial government, we will accept minor changes. There have been a few of those but only of minor importance which are not even worthy of mention. In short, I can say that no serious problem has come up.

[English]

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the President of the Privy Council. I notice he has just stepped out of the chamber, temporarily I hope. Possibly I might have permission to postpone my question.

● (1420)

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER TERMICA SILICE LIMITÉE WILL OBTAIN GRANT—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

As House leader of the Social Credit Party and considering the present political and economic context in the province of Quebec—I hope the minister will understand the importance of my question—and considering also that Termica Silice Limitée whose head office is located in Noranda, in the riding of Témiscamingue, made an application for a subvention to allow it to exploit a natural resource of the area, while creating a certain number of jobs, can the minister tell the House whether this company will get a favourable answer within a few days so it can go ahead with its project?

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member for Bellechasse, whom I congratulate for the new responsibility his group gave him, that indeed I have had the application for about three weeks now and that a few days ago I met two promoters involved in this project with whom I discussed it at length. I agreed that a representative of my department could meet them any time to get more information on the extent and the implications of their project. I hope we will soon know what we can do. The House and the hon. member will realize that the promoters sent us this application only three weeks ago.

INQUIRY WHETHER MINISTER WILL TREAT QUEBEC REQUESTS THE SAME AS THOSE OF OTHER PROVINCES

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question.

Can the minister tell the House whether, notwithstanding what the head of the Quebec government has said about him during the weekend, he is willing to consider the requests from