

NATIONAL BUILDING CODE

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO IMPROVE FIRE ESCAPE ROUTES IN HIGHRISE BUILDINGS

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, may I address my question to his parliamentary secretary. With the rising population in urban centres in Canada and the increase in highrise buildings, new problems have arisen in connection with fire safety. Since the tallest ladders available to fire departments reach only between the sixth and eighth floors of most buildings and since stairway escape routes can become blocked with smoke, thus preventing safe exit, can the minister inform the House whether consideration has been given to the inclusion of improved evacuation systems in the National Building Code?

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this matter comes under provincial jurisdiction but I will inform the minister and look into the matter.

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PUBLIC BUILDINGS

PLACE DU PORTAGE—REQUEST FOR IMPROVED FIRE EXITS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, may I put my supplementary question to the Minister of Public Works. Since the landscaping and architecture of the government's new complex, Place du Portage in Hull, is suspected by fire experts of inhibiting safe exit from the building in case of an emergency and since this situation seems especially critical in light of recent reports that some fire alarm bells ring seven times a day in that complex causing concern about what will happen when a genuine emergency arises, can the minister inform the House whether consideration has been given to the installation of a balcony evacuation system in Place du Portage in an effort to better protect the lives of public servants relocated in that office building? Can the minister tell the House whether the department has complied with all local fire regulations of the city of Hull and the National Building Code?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the buildings do comply with the codes but we are looking at the situation. The comment vis-à-vis the landscaping is a new wrinkle, however. It is my understanding that we have met the standards as laid down and the buildings comply with them.

Oral Questions

ENERGY

PIPELINE TREATY WITH UNITED STATES—INQUIRY AS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the announced lobbying in Washington by the State of Alaska and El Paso, joined by Southern Gas and Tenneco, and as one of the major uncertainties of the Alcan route is that unreasonable tariffs and uncertain political actions in Canada might not be controlled, is the pipeline treaty signed, in place, and functioning?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I should like to be able to consult with my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, on the exact status of the pipeline treaty. I know there has been initialling by both sides, but whether there has been formal approval because there was an agreement, I am not in a position at the moment to indicate.

ALCAN PIPELINE—POSSIBILITY APPROVAL OF ROUTE INVOLVES EXCHANGING OIL AND GAS WITH UNITED STATES

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the approval of the Alcan route involve a degree of swapping and a type of continental energy exchange of oil and gas to some extent, with these products being treated as a marketable commodity in some way?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of questions which the National Energy Board raised in its reports and the kinds of questions Cabinet will be looking at in the weeks to come.

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[Translation]

AIRPORTS

SUGGESTED RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF FRENCH LANGUAGE FOR VISUAL FLIGHTS AT MIRABEL

Mr. Serge Joyal (Maisonneuve-Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that Mirabel is now operating at less than 50 per cent of its capacity and that visual flights are authorized in other international airports of Canada, that the Minister of Transport sent some instructions on June 30, 1977, to the regional manager of Montreal to prohibit entirely landings and take-offs for visual flights at this airport and that the report on the investigation of bilingualism implementation for visual flights has not yet been made public, can the Minister of Transport tell the House if he would consider cancelling his instructions of June 30, 1977, providing the necessary services to Mirabel airport for visual flights and allowing pilots who hold a qualification certificate to land and take-off on visual flights at Mirabel airport?