

education is a provincial responsibility and that primary consideration has to prevail, although I will probably be meeting with the minister of British Columbia within the next two or three weeks.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

REASON FOR FAILURE TO ADOPT STANDARDS FOR ASBESTOS FIBRES UNDER CLEAN AIR ACT—POSSIBLE PROTEST FROM UNITED STATES

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to those concerning asbestos and is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Would the minister advise the House why she has not brought in regulations concerning asbestos under the Clean Air Act so we can have a national environmental standard to try to assist the problem at Thetford Mines?

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will realize that the Clean Air Act does not give me the power to bring down a recommendation; this is the responsibility of the provinces. Under the Clean Air Act, I do not obtain the authority to tell a specific company to change its stack emissions. However, in co-operation with the different provinces we do consult and decide upon a certain order of priorities for looking at different sectors of industry where we think damage is greatest. We have done that consistently in about 10 or 12 cases. We are now looking into the asbestos question, and when we get together to regulate those standards the provinces, using their authority, will implement them.

Mr. Leggatt: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister advise the House if she can confirm that the environmental protection agency of the United States has lodged a formal complaint with the government concerning ambient asbestos air that is blowing across the border into Maine, creating what appears to be a growing international incident? Secondly, if the minister would provide national standards under the Clean Air Act, we might have less of these kinds of protests from the United States.

Mrs. Sauvé: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that the EPA has sent a protest to this country; however, it might be the case. Should the EPA send a protest, under our trans-boundary responsibilities I would indeed be able to intervene.

* * *

[Translation]

TRANSPORT

POSSIBILITY OF NEW FORMULA FOR GRANTING DREDGING CONTRACTS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

Considering that the few companies qualified for dredging operations are now quite busy with courts, considering

Oral Questions

also that essential works must be carried out each year and that tenders are absolutely necessary, I would like to ask the minister whether his department has decided to wait for completion of the investigation before asking those companies for new submissions or whether it has decided to use a new formula to perform those operations?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that we have decided to halt all dredging operations in Canada till the investigation is over, because nobody knows how long it will last. One thing for sure, the department will undoubtedly be extremely careful before awarding a contract to one of the companies involved.

[English]

PROPOSED ERASURE OF PART OF DEBT OF CNR, AIR CANADA AND ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY—POSSIBILITY OF LEGISLATION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport involving an announcement of transport policy. It has been indicated that the government may erase \$3.5 billion of debt not only of the CNR and Air Canada but also the St. Lawrence seaway, a matter I raised the other day. Can the minister advise whether the government is seriously considering cancelling these debts and when an announcement will be made in this regard?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in the over-all policy that we are trying to outline, and which does not come fast enough, this is one of the points we are looking into.

Mr. Alexander: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the ramifications and importance of such a decision, is it the intention of the minister to introduce legislation in the event he does approve the erasure of that debt? Is it his intention to bring in legislation relating to Air Canada and the other companies in order that the matter can be seriously delved into?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Without being a magician, Mr. Speaker, if we decide in the case of the seaway, for example, to wipe out the debt I think we would have to amend the legislation.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

INDUSTRIAL MILK—DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW SUPPORT PRICE

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Would the minister indicate when he intends to announce the new support price for industrial milk for the coming dairy year beginning on April 1?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Soon, Mr. Speaker.