

INDIAN AFFAIRS

MERCURY POISONING—STEPS TO PROVIDE ALTERNATE SOURCE OF FOOD

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and arises from a series of questions that were asked concerning mercury poisoning in northwest Quebec. The Minister of National Health and Welfare indicated there were plans issued to provide alternate protein sources or alternate livelihood for those people, some 20 of whom now have symptoms of poisoning and at least three of whom have been confirmed as having the Minamata disease. Could the minister advise the House specifically rather than generally what he intends to do to provide a protein source for those Indians who now are reaching the fishing season and will have to find something to eat; secondly, what he intends to do to give those who depend so much on fishing an alternate livelihood.

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question of the hon. member, it is my understanding that arrangements are being made for an alternate protein source. I am sorry that I will have to check and give the hon. member the details concerning the question. Alternate economic development. It is similar to the situation in northwestern Ontario, and it is a slow and difficult process to develop in these areas.

TESTING FOR MERCURY POISONING AT CAUGHNAWAGA RESERVE—REASON REPORT ON CEDAR RAPIDS NATIVES NOT RELEASED

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, the testing results at the Caughnawaga Reserve have now been released, showing the levels there. There are some levels as high as 11.7 parts per million which is well above the standard of .5 for Canada for example. The TB levels are also very high. Can the minister advise whether any testing is going on on the Caughnawaga Reserve on the potential of mercury poisoning in that area and would he also advise why the report on the Cedar Rapids Indians which was done last November has not yet been released to the public so that these Indians will know whether or not they are suffering.

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I think the questions on the report should be directed to my colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I think it will be found that fish is a relatively minor source of protein so far as the Caughnawaga Reserve is concerned. It is not like the other locations.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

DATE ON WHICH TIME FOR APPEAL IN IRVING CASE STARTS

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, this is a question for the Minister of Justice. It follows an earlier series of questions about the fairness of

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the appeal proceedings. Can the minister assure the House that the time for the appeal in the Irving pulp mill case will run from the date of promulgation of the procedures and not from the date of the administrator's order.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I would not want to give that assurance without specifically looking at the wording of the act. As I indicated, the procedures will be laid down without prejudice to the parties and that will be very soon.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

DATE OF HALL REPORT ON PENSIONS FOR RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. In view of the numerous requests I, and I am sure many other members of this House, have been receiving in respect of railroad workers and the Hall report, could I ask the minister if he could give us a progress report in this regard or tell the House when we can expect the report which is long overdue.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. member is referring to the question of pensions for railway employees and my advice is that Mr. Hall will have his report out at the end of February or toward the middle of March at the latest.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR NEW PACKAGING REGULATIONS—POSSIBLE EXEMPTION OF SMALL BAKERIES

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It concerns the March 1 date which has been set for the regulations to be brought in with regard to labelling and packaging of consumer goods. I should like to ask the minister if he is giving consideration to extending that March 1 date so that retailers can use up more of the packages they have on hand? Second, I should like to ask him if small bakeries in small towns which cater only to the local trade and package their goods over the counter will be exempt from these regulations.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my answer to the first part of the question is no. As for the second part, arrangements will be made by the officials responsible for supervising the application of that act to facilitate the transition for the companies and spare them too many difficulties. On the other hand, where small companies are concerned which deal in cakes and bread, recommendations have already been submitted to their association with a view to finding some accommodation.