

Oral Questions

shown in the issue of nuclear fusion. It is a matter that the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources are following. We are following developments in this field, but at present, as the hon. member knows, no specific budget has been allocated.

We are talking in terms of an energy process which is generally agreed to be decades down the line. It is a matter where, as a first priority for Canada, resources will be allocated. I want to assure the hon. member that the government will be following developments in this respect very closely. The matter may be reviewed at a later stage.

Mr. Gilchrist: Madam Speaker, if that is the case, there must be some misunderstanding by the newspapers of Canada today. Maybe this is a matter of confusion. Vice-president Mondale's office is not confused: an official in his office stated:

Magnetic fusion programs are moving along very well, in our opinion. So well, in fact, that . . . it is time to move magnetic fusion out of the pure research stage.

So it is more than just speculation. Would the minister agree that if Thomas Edison had had such ministerial guidance prior to his 1,000 experiments leading to his noted invention, he would have been told that the light bulb could not be invented and all of us today would have been operating in the dark, like Liberal science policy?

An hon. Member: Election promises.

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I should like to advise my hon. friend that he might check whether or not Vice-president Mondale is a lawyer. He might be, and the opinion of Mr. Mondale might not be of much more value in that respect. So we have to check.

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EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION COMMISSION**AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS RESPECTING WIVES OF FISHERMEN**

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Can the minister confirm to the House that the Employment and Immigration Commission has approved amendments to the unemployment insurance regulations which will enable wives of fishermen to claim unemployment insurance benefits?

Some hon. Members: Of course.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to tell the hon. member that in fact the employment commission has authorized that the wives of fishermen will now be eligible for benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act.

AGRICULTURE**APPLICATION FOR ACQUISITION OF MAPLEWOOD POULTRY PROCESSORS, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.**

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. The minister is aware of the application made for the acquisition by Cargill Enterprises of Maplewood Poultry Processors in Abbotsford, British Columbia. Is he in a position to advise me and the House of the present status of that application?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows that at one time the producers had recommended to us that we not approve a certain application to obtain ownership of this company. It was Cargill that had applied for the purchase.

At one time the government of British Columbia asked that everything be done to stop this operation, in telegrams to producers, and then there was a slight change of mind. So now we are searching and hoping we can entice someone to buy this plant, because we feel there should be more competition in the poultry processing industry in B.C., because if Cargill had been able to obtain this plant it would have given them approximately 80 per cent control of all poultry processing in B.C., and we think this would be dangerous. We are working hard to try to come up with a solution, but we might not be able to.

Mr. Patterson: I am sure the minister was aware—he alluded to the fact—that there had been a change of mind. It included not only the union representing the workers, but the turkey producers themselves and the government of B.C.

In view of the fact that this has put out of work 135 employees in the immediate area, and is threatening the viability of the turkey producing industry, would the minister assure us that he will continue, on a very urgent basis, to try to reach a decision so far as the application is concerned?

Mr. Whelan: I am sure the hon. member is also aware of the fact that my department ran the plant for approximately three weeks to make sure the poultry were processed. We are prepared to move back in there if necessary, if we are sure that some other potential buyer might be available for that plant. We will have meetings with my officials later. We are very concerned about the employees. We are also very concerned about the processing facilities being operational.

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SMALL BUSINESS**INTRODUCTION OF DEVELOPMENT BONDS PROGRAM**

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance I should like to put my question to the Minister of State for Finance. Recognizing that these are difficult economic times, I am sure everyone in