

Oral Questions

fact the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond and I have been protesting to this and previous ministers for some years that the amount received by preretired coal miners has never been adequate—I might add, with some success in the case of the present minister—may I ask if during the recent session with Mr. Tom Kent, President of Devco, this question was discussed? If so, what action was taken, keeping in mind that even with a cost of living escalation these forcibly retired coal miners are still not receiving enough to get by on?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the largest number who are preretired I think I indicated to the House some time ago, and certainly discussed with the president of the corporation, the fact that the corporation would have the government's approval if it were to move to the same arrangement as exists with old age pensions. That would be to escalate their pensions not so much by 2 per cent but in accordance with the cost of living index once the necessary legislation has passed the House, which presumably will be in a short time as it is now in the other place. In addition, of course, during the past few months there was a substantial increase in preretirement leave and other benefits. There are one or two specific anomalies with regard to certain individuals, which I have discussed at great length with the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond and will also be prepared to discuss with the hon. member and which we are trying to iron out in the interests of equity.

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GRAIN**RAPESEED MARKETING PLEBISCITE—MAILING OF
ADDITIONAL BALLOTS TO PRODUCERS**

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. With regard to the vote on rapeseed marketing which has been under way since December 4 and the ballots that have been sent to producers, may I ask the minister whether ballots are being mailed now to other producers, in addition to the 36,000 to whom ballots were sent, for December delivery? How many additional ballots are being sent out?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the figure originally used, in the order of 36,000 and some ballots, is the total number known to us to be eligible. As I understand it, this is the number now being sent out. There was an original number sent out and it was found that some additional ones were left out. These have gone out later. Therefore, ballots postmarked January 4 will be the deadline for receipt of ballots.

Mr. Gleave: Can the minister tell the House how many additional ballots are being sent out and whether all producers will now have until January 4 to complete sending in their returns? Can he assure the House that, indeed, all those producers who should receive ballots are going to receive them?

[Mr. Muir.]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the deadline of January 4 for returning ballots applies to all producers, so that the deadline is extended for all. Obviously, we attempted to make sure that everyone who should get a ballot obtained one. We publicized the fact that the material and ballots were going out so that we could receive information from producers if they did not receive them. I would have to obtain the exact number for the hon. member.

● (1450)

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): May I ask the President of the Privy Council whether he will hold discussions with the Chief Electoral Officer and request that in the electoral district of Saskatoon-Humboldt a line for use by undecided voters be provided on the ballots?

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ENERGY**SOURCE OF INFORMATION LEADING TO DECISION TO
EXTEND PRICE FREEZE ON WESTERN CRUDE OIL**

Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources arising from the minister's statement on Friday that the technical advisory committee and its recommendations are to be used only in situations of crisis. Can the minister tell the House the source of the information included in the Prime Minister's speech on energy last Thursday?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): I am not sure to which aspect of the speech the hon. gentleman is referring but in principle the source of the information is my department and the National Energy Board.

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): To be more precise, can the minister tell us the source of the expert and detailed information which led to the Prime Minister's decision concerning the price freeze and the announcement of policy in that connection?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I think the hon. gentleman may be aware that there has been widespread opposition throughout the country to increasing prices in the western part of the market at a time when there has been no identifiable increase in the cost to the Canadian producing industry.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The judgment of the federal Liberal caucus in that regard was the determining factor.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): Am I correct, then, in assuming that the source of the recommendation with respect to the price freeze was that corner of the House which was the loudest when the minister made his comments?