

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of the Environment): These discussions already deal with contingency plans in case of accidents or spills. They relate to traffic schemes, the protection of the environment and compensation in case of accidents.

Mr. Fraser: Can the minister tell us specifically whether those discussions, aside from contingency plans to combat the spill itself, take into account the payment of damages after a spill has taken place?

Mrs. Sauvé: The answer is yes.

STUDY OF OKANAGAN WATER BASIN—DATE OF PUBLICATION OF REPORT

Mr. G. H. Whittaker (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. In view of the fact that the implementation task force set up in connection with the Okanagan water basin study completed its report last December, and in view of the concern felt by the people of the Okanagan that action be taken on this study, may I ask when the minister intends to release this report?

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of the Environment): I am not sure whether the implementation report is finished yet. In general, I favour the release of these reports. However, it might be some time before discussions are completed between DREE, the provincial authority and ourselves as to what exactly will go into that report. I think I can say in a general way that this report will be released at an opportune time.

Mr. Whittaker: The report was completed last December. Is it because the federal government is not prepared to assist in funding the projects recommended by the study that the report is not being released?

Mrs. Sauvé: No, we are looking at a joint program for enhancing that region. The report of last December was a study. It was released.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED EXECUTION OF MIKHAIL LEVIEV BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES—SUGGESTED PROTEST BY CANADA

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs—the hon. gentleman may have had notice of this question, not from me but from someone else. Will the government remind the USSR, through its embassy, that the intended execution of Mikhail Leviev for economic crimes will harm that country's international reputation?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs): I will take that suggestion under sympathetic consideration.

Oral Questions

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

SUGGESTION PROPOSED LAY-OFF OF EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT AFFECT MAINTENANCE WORKERS—INTERVENTION IN PROPOSED RATE INCREASE

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Transport? Last week, the President of CNR announced that because of a reduction in traffic, about 2,500 employees of that railway company will be laid off. In view of the fact that of this number more than 1,500, it is estimated, are workers involved in the operation of maintenance services, and in view of the fact that as a result of an increasing number of railway accidents, derailments and so on, the CTC has called on the railways to upgrade the work done on track maintenance, would the minister discuss with the President of CNR the desirability of not laying off any of the people engaged in maintenance?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): I will surely discuss this matter with pleasure with the President of the CNR.

Mr. Orlikow: Since a proportion of the decrease in traffic may be due to an increase in railway rates earlier this year, of between 25 and 30 per cent and to proposed further increases of 20 per cent, will the minister pursue with the railways and the CTC his expressed opposition to these rate increases?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): It might be one of the reasons. I know there are other reasons, but this is a matter I would like to discuss with Mr. Bandeen.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO STIMULATE CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, for whom I have the highest esteem.

Because public demand for the construction and purchase of houses is very high, the funds available to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation have already been committed for the summer, at least with regard to the Quebec area, and because Canada has just granted a \$10 million loan to Cuba for a term of 30 years and an interest rate of 3 per cent, can the minister tell the House whether additional funds will be made available to the CMHC, and this, on the same terms as Cuba, to meet the demand, to give new impetus to the building industry and to fight against unemployment?

[English]

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): I want to assure the hon. member that while the AHOP program is moving extremely well, there are still other funds available. I would urge all Canadians who are interested in securing loans to contact their CMHC offices, also, to contact the banks and private lenders from whom they can borrow under the new legislation. There