

Inquiries of the Ministry

Panarctic Oils and the consortium of United States utilities and transmission companies?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if any objections were made; for my part, I do not have any. I shall ask the president of the company for a copy of the agreement and, if possible, we shall table it.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Douglas: I am rising on a point of order regarding whether or not the President of Panarctic Oils is going to make the decision or whether the minister is going to make the decision. The minister says he has no objection. I am saying that the Canadian taxpayers as the single largest investor in this company have the right to be supplied with this information and that the decision should be made by the minister, not by the president of the company.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

DELAY IN PAYMENT OF BENEFITS—REIMBURSEMENT OF PROVINCES FOR WELFARE EXPENDITURES—DECENTRALIZATION OF PAY OFFICES

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour. Can the hon. member say whether acceptable arrangements have been made with all the provinces for the reimbursement of welfare costs incurred as a result of delays in the payment of unemployment insurance claims, and whether the federal government has agreed to reimburse the provinces to the extent of 100 per cent in such cases?

Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the immediate task is to ensure that unemployment insurance benefits are paid on schedule to all qualified claimants. However, negotiations are under way with all the provinces and have been completed successfully with most of them to make certain that in certain cases interim payments can be expedited through welfare offices and reimbursement made later by the Unemployment Insurance Commission. We are concerned with getting "groceries" on the tables of those who are out of work and we shall make every effort to ensure that this is done.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lundrigan: Having heard that answer, perhaps I might put a simpler question to the parliamentary secretary, one he may be able to grapple with. Has the department accepted the recommendation which is now accepted unanimously in the Atlantic and western regions that procedures be decentralized from Moncton into the other provinces and from Winnipeg into the other provinces?

Mr. Perrault: The hon. member will be interested to know that I went to New Brunswick over the weekend and conferred with our officials there. He will be delighted to know that we have installed toll-free lines to Bathurst from several localities in north and northeastern New

[Mr. Douglas.]

Brunswick. A special unit has been established in Moncton to enable us to solve Bathurst claim problems quickly. The toll-free concept has been extended to other centres—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Perrault: As I have said, the object is to get groceries on the tables of these people with the least possible delay—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the parliamentary secretary that he might wish to return to motions for the purpose of making a statement. He should keep this in mind in replying to questions.

• (1220)

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the lack of clarity in my original question. May I again ask the parliamentary secretary whether the department has accepted the recommendation to decentralize the pay offices from Moncton and Winnipeg and open offices in other provinces? This means establishing pay offices in all of the provinces in question, not just the two I have mentioned.

Mr. Perrault: Mr. Speaker, there will be a marked improvement in service in northeastern New Brunswick. The hon. member may be interested to know that of the 134 alleged—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to call the parliamentary secretary to order. He should look from time to time in the direction of the Chair and when asked to resume his seat he should do so.

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FISHERIES

MARINE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT—CONSULTATION WITH UNITED STATES TO ACHIEVE COMMON FRONT FOR LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the actual and threatened depletion of our Atlantic coast fisheries resources by distant water factory fleets from overseas, will the Secretary of State for External Affairs undertake to meet at an early date with his United States counterpart in the hope that present differences between Canada and the United States over proper management of our marine resources may be worked out, so that hopefully both countries will present a united front at the proposed 1973 Law of the Sea Conference on this urgent and important matter? While he is replying—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Crouse: —will he also indicate when the conference will be held?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his suggestion and I will follow it up.