

Oral Questions

others where CIDA is participating in the upgrading or the provision of railroad services, I have asked that inquiries be made and the necessary work undertaken to see if the Sydney Steel plant is in a position to provide materials. I will get an up-to-date report on this and provide it to the hon. member as soon as possible. I think the matter came up initially in September when I was in Cape Breton.

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POST OFFICE

DAMAGE TO CHRISTMAS PARCEL—REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Postmaster General. I hope he likes Christmas cake because an angry constituent of mine is sending him this one which arrived via the Canadian postal system. The minister can see how well wrapped it is. Normally, one would expect that a cake in a tin well wrapped in cardboard and tape would not arrive looking as if it had been run over by a transport. Can the minister tell the House how things like this are happening in the post office at the present time?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, being mindful and knowledgeable of the high quality of cuisine found in the Parry Sound area, I am indeed very interested in ascertaining exactly how such a monstrous event could take place.

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● (1452)

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DELAY IN RESPONDING TO STEVESTON OIL SPILL—
GOVERNMENT ACTION TO RECTIFY

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I think that it is appropriate that we move to the Minister of the Environment. In view of the fact that in the Steveston spill last summer, the first report came in at 11 p.m. and the officials did not follow it up until the next day and it took 44 hours to get equipment there from 15 miles away, I wish to ask the minister if anybody responsible in his department has been sacked.

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)): No, Mr. Speaker, no one has been sacked in relation to the Steveston spill. If the hon. member would like, I can give him a very good run-through on the events in relation to that spill. I did this not long after I got the job. I was satisfied that everything possible had been done. There was a little delay in getting the spill reported, but once it was reported, Environment Canada officials were on the spot right away and did a very thorough cleanup.

[Mr. Jamieson.]

PROPOSED KITIMAT PIPELINE—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS STUDIED

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): I beg to differ with the minister. There was no delay in reporting it. His giving me a run-through here will be of small comfort to the fishermen who lost their livelihood for a week or ten days. Shifting that emphasis to the Kitimat proposal, the Minister of Justice said that the Kitimat consortium is trying to do an end run around the government. Does this minister agree with the Minister of Justice? If so, does that not indicate there is a special requirement on his part to make sure that all the environmental implications are put in place and researched before they go ahead with this proposal?

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)): Mr. Speaker, there will be no end run around the government of Canada by anybody with regard to a pipeline application. All of the environmental implications relating to the proposed Kitimat pipeline or any other pipeline will be investigated by my department.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

LAY-OFFS BY CANADIAN NATIONAL—UNION REQUEST FOR
INVESTIGATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Has the minister received a request from the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Transport Workers to appoint a commission of inquiry to look into the fact that Canadian National Railways has in recent months laid off 6,000 of its employees and has instituted sharp cutbacks in service in fields such as express?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, I have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Orlikow: Can the minister indicate whether he will be appointing that commission and, if so, when and who will be involved?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I discussed with the railwaymen to whom the hon. member is referring the advisability of setting up an industrial inquiry commission. We came to the conclusion that the whole subject matter of layoffs could be dealt with in a more general way. We are trying to discuss the best way that this can be done. The process by which it could be done will be of particular interest to the railway people.