

Oral Questions

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, we will fulfil our obligations between Canada and Saskatchewan. That notwithstanding, as the hon. member has pointed out we have had negotiations with N.B. Power. I would like to move forward on those negotiations. If the Government of New Brunswick and N.B. Power are willing to sit down with us, we are ready to do that.

I say to the hon. member that Canada's reputation in this field is second to none. The CANDU system is a good system. May I say to him as well that the best single plant over the last number of years on a world scale has been Lepreau I in New Brunswick.

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[Translation]

MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FINANCE

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance, in the absence of the Minister of Finance.

I would like the minister to tell us why his government decided to issue indexed Canada bonds that pay less interest in the short term but put more of the deficit burden on future generations.

Higher unemployment insurance premiums and many government decisions are intended to tell us not to pass on the cost of deficits to future generations. Now they are doing exactly the opposite!

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, in managing the public finances, in particular revenue and the debt and deficit, the government has a very wide range of options, including indexed bonds, of course.

This is not a widespread policy but it is used in some cases because we think that at a particular time, the market is more receptive to it and thus we can manage our debt to best advantage.

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[English]

AIRPORT SECURITY

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport regarding the awarding of a security services contract by

Air Canada at Halifax, Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton airports.

An announcement by the then Minister of Transport in July 1988 said:

These initiatives should help reduce the turnover rate among airport screening personnel and—airlines will include a specification to protect current employees' wages and fringe benefits at the level of the existing contract.

I want to ask the minister: Why has the government not followed through with its policy? Why is it allowing a new company to come in to displace most of the workers and to pay the new workers at a level much less than the contract rate? What is the government going to do to live up to its commitment?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the contracts are negotiated between the airlines and the screening contractors. The policy that was announced in 1988 did in fact agree that on re-hires those wages would be protected. In the case of where new employees are hired that policy does not apply.

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[Translation]

MINING

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

For several months, those interested in Quebec's mining industry have been waiting for a new mineral development subagreement in Quebec.

Can the minister tell us today whether Quebec has indicated to the federal government that it intends to sign a new agreement for the Quebec mining industry? If so, will this agreement be signed before the next federal budget?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec has set its priorities for regional development agreements. They are industrial development, forestry and tourism. Mining comes fourth. However, I met the Quebec minister of Energy, Madam Bacon, last night. She told me about her concerns. I told her that the Government of Canada would consider Quebec's priorities as its own, since the Government of Quebec always determines the order of priorities for its regional development.