

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to know if the opposition is really serious about hearing an answer to the question. Last year we tried, for a while, to keep guards in the towers at all times, even when inmates were locked in their cells. It was found to be an expensive operation and it was recommended to me as being unnecessary. As a result of that escape—

Mr. Hees: How many got out?

Mr. Allmand: I must say that few escaped after midnight and before the men got up in the morning, but there were these escapes. I am looking at this question again; it involves the question of cost-benefit ratio. Is it worth keeping guards in all towers between midnight and six or seven o'clock in the morning? We will look into that once more.

Mr. Reynolds: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As prisoners are still escaping between midnight and eight o'clock in the morning, would the minister consider putting dummies in the towers so that prisoners will think they are being watched?

Mr. Allmand: Are you available for the job?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

* * *

FINANCE**REDUCTION OF TARIFF ON BICYCLES—EFFECT ON INDUSTRY AT RIVERS, MANITOBA**

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance—

An hon. Member: He is in the tower.

Mr. Dinsdale: —perhaps I can direct my question to the Prime Minister. As the recent reduction from 25 per cent to 15 per cent in the customs duty on imported bicycles is threatening the industry at the former Rivers defence base, that being a successful project supported by the Department of Indian Affairs, what action is the government taking to resolve this conflict of interests?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance who has been consulting with me on this matter because DREE is involved in the project, may I advise the hon. member that the matter is now under consideration. No decision has been made about duty. I should point out that some changes in sales tax regulations will be of benefit to the company and may offset to some degree the effects of the decline in the rate of duty.

• (1440)

Mr. Dinsdale: A supplementary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Has the minister been made aware of this problem and has he moved to protect the interests of the native people who are employed on this project?

[Mr. Hees.]

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have been made aware of the problem and I have been discussing the situation with my colleague, the Minister of Finance.

* * *

INDUSTRY**STEEL—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO DETERMINE IF PRICE INCREASES RELATED TO COSTS**

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. In view of the conclusion reached by Judge Estey in the steel price inquiry that "any future price increases should be linked directly to cost increases, otherwise the profit margins which customarily obtain in the industry will be exceeded", and in view of the announcement by the steel companies this week of further price increases ranging from seven to twelve per cent in the case of certain products, has the government conducted an investigation to determine whether these increases are directly related to costs, and, if not, why not?

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce I take notice of this question. I will be pleased to get the necessary information.

[English]

Mr. Symes: I did not get an answer to that question from either the minister or the Prime Minister, but I think the Prime Minister can answer this supplementary: will the right hon. gentleman ensure that these price increases, if justified, will apply only to new production and not to the existing inventory, so as to prevent, in effect the double ticketing of steel products?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am sure this is the kind of question I would have referred to the parliamentary secretary had I been given notice of it. His minister is presently meeting with the Prime Minister of Iran. This is not the kind of question to which I have the answer in my head, and I think the House should realize that. If I had answered the question I would have answered it in exactly the same way as the parliamentary secretary did.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES**GOVERNMENT POSITION ON DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT OF URANIUM**

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.