

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for getting his bid in for a commemorative stamp for 1978. I can assure him that his request will be given due consideration along with the many other requests I have on my desk of a similar nature.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL AID TO THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES IN THE FORM OF OIL

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Now that the minister has put himself above politics, I wonder if he has had time to examine a suggestion I made about a month ago that Canada take the lead in adding oil as a new dimension to our foreign aid programs to help relieve the balance of payments difficulties of the underdeveloped world?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat offended at the suggestion that I have risen above politics! I want to assure the hon. member that I have given consideration to his suggestion but have concluded that oil would not be a suitable commodity for aid purposes and that probably it would be in our best interests to rely on commodities in which we have a comparative advantage over other suppliers.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

PROPOSED OPERATION OF CAPE BRETON COAL MINES BY CONSORTIUM—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF REPORT ON PROPOSED STEEL COMPLEX

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion who reports to the House for the Cape Breton Development Corporation. May I ask if he or any officials of his department or the government have held discussions with the Nova Scotia government on the possibility of the Cape Breton coal mines being turned over to a company or consortium of companies to operate them?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): No, Mr. Speaker, there have been no discussions of the nature outlined by the hon. member. I am aware, of course, that a proposal has been discussed at some non-governmental meetings. Indeed, I made reference to it as recently as this morning in conversation with Premier Regan but there is not any substance to it in terms of immediate action.

Mr. Muir: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the minister to tread very softly on that point. Is he aware that the Nova Scotia minister of finance is quoted as having said in New York that coal mines in Cape Breton will be operated by a consortium in connection with a possible new steel company? Can the minister

Oral Questions

assure the House that, as he promised, he will release the report of Canstel on the proposal for a steel complex? I realize that the Prime Minister has said that when members of this House get a few yards away from the Hill we are nobodies, but I do not think the minister holds that view so would he make sure that this House is advised of any proposals of such a nature?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to reply briefly. Let me say without any qualification that we have not in any sense discussed any change in the status of Devco or the coal mining operation either with Devco or the government of Nova Scotia. The only reference to it was a passing one during a recent meeting. I was not aware there was one in New York but I did know such a comment had been made. On the question of the Canstel report, I am prepared to table it at the earliest possible time but there are two restrictions. One is the translation which is necessary under the House rules, and the other is deletion of—I do not think it is important, but nevertheless it is confidential information. I hope to do that within a week or ten days, as soon as the translators are through.

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ENERGY

URANIUM—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF MAINTENANCE OF ADEQUATE SUPPLIES FOR CANADIAN NEEDS

Mr. Ross Milne (Pell-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, perhaps I can put a question to his parliamentary secretary. Concerns have been expressed recently about the adequacy of uranium resources in many countries of the world, particularly the United States. Can the hon. member assure the House that there are adequate supplies of uranium in Canada and will Canada protect her own long term needs in view of the fact that some very lucrative long term contracts are likely to become available?

Mr. Maurice Foster (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that there are adequate supplies for the present nuclear generating capacity. It is recognized, however, that the demand for uranium will increase fourfold or sixfold in the next decade. That is why the government last month announced its policy of requiring that ongoing reserves be maintained for domestic reactors for 30 years.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

SUGGESTED CONSULTATIONS WITH QUEBEC ON PROGRAM FOR BEEF PRODUCERS

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

In view of the very difficult situation of the Quebec beef producers, and since the Quebec Minister of Agriculture,