

*Oral Questions*

tion, but I hope hon. members will make an effort not to bring into their questions the proceedings which are before the committee. I think the question was asked in an irregular way. The hon. member cannot refer to proceedings which are currently before the committee and base his question on those proceedings. The question might be asked directly without reference to any proceedings outside the House.

● (1510)

**Mr. Andre:** In that case I ask whether the minister will consider reducing the scope of this bill so as to cover allocation and supervision, and possibly provide a time limit?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** If the hon. member has precise suggestions to make in this regard, I would be glad to hear them in the committee. We can, of course, make amendments there.

**Mr. Bell:** There is lots of time.

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**SUPPLY AND SERVICES****PURCHASING CRITERIA OF DEPARTMENT—PREFERENCE FOR CANADIAN PRODUCTS**

**Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Supply and Services. Are his purchasing criteria designed to give preference to Canadian products manufactured and distributed in Canada by Canadian companies?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Minister of Supply and Services):** It is a well known fact, Mr. Speaker, that it is an important consideration in the assessment of contracts.

[English]

**Mr. Paproski:** If those are the criteria, can the minister tell us what formula he is using or plans to use?

[Translation]

**Mr. Goyer:** Mr. Speaker, we would really have to make a policy statement and I do not think that it would be proper to do it now. In short, it is not possible to answer such a complicated question.

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[English]

**FINANCE****REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION TO ENSURE CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES BY PARLIAMENT**

**Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. Since the Auditor General has drawn attention to the use of special warrants involving several millions of dollars in circumstances where the public good did not urgently require it, can the minister inform us whether he is considering a change in the legislation, in particular

[Mr. Speaker.]

amendments to the Public Administration Act and the Appropriations Act, to ensure that funds spent will have the authority of parliament behind them?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** Yes, Mr. Speaker,

**Mr. Knight:** Since the Auditor General has proposed to the Parliament of Canada that he be given authority to carry out efficiency studies of the administration of the various departments of government as part of his duties, which would be of great assistance to individual members of parliament in reviewing public expenditures—

**Some hon. Members:** Question!

**Mr. Knight:**—can the President of the Treasury Board tell the House whether he is prepared to allow the authority of the Auditor General to be extended in this way to ensure individual members of parliament the right to examine the books closely?

**Mr. Drury:** The Auditor General has proposed—and the public accounts committee concurred in his proposal—that a study committee be established to make recommendations to parliament as to precisely what his powers should be. I am heartily in favour of this study being made and of being guided by its conclusions. I do not believe, however, the Auditor General has proposed that he be made responsible for efficiency reports.

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**TRADE****REQUEST THAT INCREASE IN IMPORT DUTY ON WORK BOOTS AND SHOES FROM SOCIALIST BLOC COUNTRIES BE POSTPONED**

**Hon. Paul Hellyer (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the fact that immediate implementation of an upward valuation for duty purposes of work boots and shoes from socialist bloc countries will result in an increase of about \$5 a pair at the retail level, will the minister, as a small contribution toward the containment of inflation, agree to postpone the proposed increase for a few months?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** I am not sure I can give that undertaking but I will take the matter under advisement. I might add that I shall have more to say about the footwear industry of Canada later this week.

**Mr. Hellyer:** Since a 25 per cent increase in the price of work boots is inconsistent with any sensible industrial strategy, would the minister make an early announcement to the House that he has agreed to postpone this increase.

**Mr. Gillespie:** I think I have already answered that question.

**Mr. Hellyer:** One final supplementary. It is very simple. Will the minister guarantee an adequate supply of work boots at reasonable prices so that the working people of