

Oral Questions

policy which goes back to my predecessor. We approved the proposal presented by the company.

However, in August or early September—I would have to check the exact date—we were informed that the proposals, as agreed to, had been changed very substantially, especially in the area of the ownership of the licences involved. I informed the company that this was not acceptable, no more than the Nord Sea proposal which was advocated by the hon. member. We have tried to find an alternative which would allow the plant to go ahead, but under strict Canadian control.

● (1452)

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, as there are a lot of men and women in the St. Lawrence area who are without employment, in an already highly unemployed area of Newfoundland, when will the minister take steps to either come forward with a proposal that is acceptable, or solve his problem so that construction can start?

In answering that, would the minister remember that the St. John's *Daily News* asks the question whether the minister is completely heartless, excessively stupid, or has somebody failed to inform him of the plight of these 3,000 people? When will the minister act to cut this Gordian knot so that the people in St. Lawrence can be given some hope?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what adjectives the member may want to use to describe me, but one which I can apply to him is that he is "misinformed". The proposal was changed very substantially. I could not accept it as it was subsequently put forth. I will be meeting this week with the company and putting forth a proposal which, hopefully, will solve the problem. If the company does not accept the counterproposal which will be made, then we will make other provisions with another organization to move in.

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POST OFFICE**REACTION OF UNIONS TO PROPOSED CREATION OF CROWN CORPORATION**

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Postmaster General. Now that the Postmaster General appears to be changing his posture, and instead of confronting the union is discussing with the four unions vitally involved in the issue the draft of the Crown corporation legislation—as he promised he would in answers to questions in this House—will he indicate whether the response of the unions to the legislative proposals has been positive or negative?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, it is true that we have had consultations with all the unions in the Post Office, including CUPW. For the time being, these discussions are in camera. As soon as we have an agreement—and I can assure hon. members that things are

[Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent).]

progressing in a positive manner—we will table it in the House.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the unions have stated that the draft legislation covers only Mickey Mouse matters, for cosmetic reasons, rather than resolving substantive issues of disjointed collective management and domination of collective bargaining by Treasury Board—which brought about the recent impasse in labour-management relations in the Post Office—will the Postmaster General continue these consultations with a view to resolving these major issues, thereby encouraging the new support for consultation being displayed by the unions as a hopeful policy for the future?

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, the consultations we have had with the unions are much more serious than the preamble to the hon. member's question. Discussions are going very well, and the hon. member does not have to worry. I am sure that the unions and management in the Post Office will get along well together and provide the best Post Office service possible.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**FINANCING OF PETRO-CANADA'S PURCHASE OF PACIFIC PETROLEUMS SHARES—EFFECT ON LEGISLATION**

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Having regard to the fact that, under the financing of the Petro-Can takeover, preferred shares are to be issued to the banks as part of that financing proposal, and because Petro-Can's statute is quite clear that preferred shares, if they are issued, are to be sold only to the Crown, is it the government's intention to bring in legislation to amend the Petro-Can statute order to allow this financing to be carried out under the law?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has misinterpreted the provisions of the statute. There is no intention to bring in any amending legislation.

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TRANSPORT**CNR POLICY ON EAST COAST**

Mr. Fouse Faour (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transport. The employees in the marine service of Canadian National's Gulf service on the east coast have expressed concern about CN's recent policy of diverting a portion of its freight traffic from the Gulf run to a Montreal company, Federal Commerce Shipping Company, operating between Halifax and St. John's, and about CN's policy of using private charters on the Labra-