

Oral Questions

Mr. Grafftey: Mr. Speaker, since this is a very important matter for all consumers in Canada, and since Bell Canada has a relatively monopolistic position in this regard, will the minister assure the House that he will read this documentation very soon and report to the House whether or not he supports this application for an increase.

Mr. Abbott: Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly expect to read the material as it does have a very important impact on the consumers, at least in this part of the country. As to whether I would appear in the House and give an opinion I doubt very much that I would, unless questioned, but we will be looking at it and if it does have an inappropriately adverse effect on the consumers I will certainly make my views felt here or elsewhere.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS**POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF INDIAN FISHERMAN'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OR REPLACEMENT OF PROGRAM**

Mr. J. R. Holmes (Lambton-Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It is related to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia and their concern for the future of the estimated 1,500 native fishermen from the province. I would like to ask the minister if he is now in a position to indicate if he will extend the Indian Fisherman's Assistance Program to March 1978.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, that matter is now under review. It is my intention to go to Prince Rupert in a couple of weeks and meet with the Native Brotherhood. I would hope to have an answer at that time.

Mr. Holmes: Mr. Speaker, to ensure the future stability of the native fishing industry the minister's predecessor indicated to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia that he would support a replacement economic development program for their industry. I should like to ask the minister what progress has been made in developing the program and specifically if he can indicate when he will announce the details of the program.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, that is part of the review to which I referred. I hope to have something to announce when I go to British Columbia and meet with the Native Brotherhood.

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ENERGY**GOVERNMENT POSITION ON CONSTRUCTION OF INTERPROVINCIAL TRANSMISSION LINES**

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Has the Government of Canada decided whether or not it will

[Mr. Abbott.]

exercise its constitutional powers under the BNA Act to permit the construction of energy transmission lines across the territory of a province to permit interprovincial transmission of hydro energy from one province to another even if the intervening province objects as for example from Newfoundland and Labrador to the Maritimes or to Ontario across Quebec with or without the consent of that province and in a similar manner to oil and gas pipelines which the minister said he favoured in July when he made a visit to Labrador. Is that now government policy or what has happened to his opinion on that?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I answered a question yesterday for one of the colleagues of the hon. member in which I indicated there were a number of matters which were under consideration at the present time with a view to bringing on the power of the Gull Island potential site which one would hope would provide power to Newfoundland, parts of Labrador and the maritimes as well. But I am not at this particular moment in time able to state the details of those considerations.

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FINANCE**PROPOSED REACTIVATION OF CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM—POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSION WITH PROVINCIAL MINISTERS**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether at the forthcoming meeting of the federal-provincial ministers of finance he will consider proposing the reactivation of the capital works projects between the federal government and the provinces in order to have an immediate impact on the high rate of unemployment.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that subject will not be on the agenda. The agenda will be related primarily to the fiscal relations between the provinces and the federal government as now covered by legislation which will expire at the end of March 1977. However, there will undoubtedly be a general discussion of the economy at that time and it will be of extreme value to the Government of Canada to get the appreciation of the various treasurers and finance ministers on appropriate measures to deal with the economy in general terms.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**UNEMPLOYMENT—DISCUSSION OF HOUSING PROGRAM WITH PROVINCES AS MEANS OF STIMULATING EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, in view of the very high rate of unemployment will the minister consider getting the question of unemployment put on the agenda and would the minister, together with his colleague the minister in charge of housing, look at the program now in