

Senator LeBreton: Perhaps the Leader of the Government should talk to those who will give her that information.

Honourable senators, if Mr. Tassé had made a phone inquiry on behalf of Mr. Chrétien, Mr. Turner or Mr. Trudeau, would the Minister of Justice have treated this matter in such a cavalier way?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the Minister of Justice has said quite openly, and repeatedly, that he did not respond to the request by Mr. Tassé because it would not have been proper, nor would it have been appropriate.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

REFORM OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SYSTEM—GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME AS PART OF PACKAGE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau: Honourable senators, my question is addressed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. It is regarding an announcement that is expected next week by her colleague the Minister of Human Resources Development regarding unemployment insurance reform. I should like to refer to a statement made by the same minister in the House on November 2 in response to a question, in which he said:

— I will tell the hon. member that one of the most important elements we are putting together as part of the new unemployment insurance package is what the Prime Minister talked about in his speech last night. He said that we will provide basic protection for families on low income with children. It is something we have been talking about in this country for a long time, and we intend to do it.

The minister seemed to imply that this basic benefit will be part of the UI reform package. Can the leader clarify her colleague's statement? Is he suggesting that a guaranteed annual income would become part of the UI package?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, as my friend noted at the beginning of his question, the Minister of Human Resources Development will be bringing forward legislation soon. If my honourable friend would wait until the legislation appears, his questions may be answered.

TRANSPORT

SEARCH AND RESCUE HELICOPTER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM—STATUS OF EH-101 CONTRACT—NATURE OF MILESTONE PAYMENTS

Hon. J. Michael Forrestall: Honourable senators, I have a brief supplementary to a question I posed yesterday regarding the final EH-101 contract. While the leader is endeavouring to get the information I requested yesterday, which I believe is necessary, could she check into and obtain for this chamber the amounts of the other payments which have been made? I refer to those payments which were described as "milestone" payments.

Together with the amount of these so-called milestone payments, I am anxious to know whether or not they were being made under the guise of compensation. I ask this question to ensure that the amount of money paid out under the milestone arrangements will be added to the total amount which will be paid to cancel this particular contract.

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will add my honourable friend's questions to the questions he asked yesterday.

NOVA SCOTIA

INDUSTRIAL MARINE PRODUCTS—RELOCATION OF PLANT FROM NORTH SYDNEY TO AMHERST—POSSIBLE DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. J. Michael Forrestall: Honourable senators, I am forced to ask this question today because apparently none of the Cape Breton members of Parliament are sufficiently concerned about employment in North Sydney to bother to respond to urgent requests from IMP employees. Industrial Marine Products took over an \$18-million to \$20-million federally-funded plant, for which it paid \$4 million to \$5 million. It now intends to move its machinery out of North Sydney to Amherst. That is fine. They are moving from an area heavily burdened by unemployment to a relatively burdened area with respect to long-term unemployment of this nature. That is a decision which a corporate body can make. Surely, before taking such a decision, there is a responsibility on the part of the government, either provincially or federally, or perhaps both, to ensure that all the options are considered, and that they are considered in conjunction with meaningful consultation with the unions involved.

Will the minister approach her colleague in cabinet, the Minister of Public Works, the senior minister from Nova Scotia, and ask if he might intervene with a view to seeking a 30- to 60-day moratorium to ensure that unionized and other employees at that plant have every opportunity to make their case known before IMP pulls out the machinery and moves it to Amherst, causing the loss of all those jobs?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will be pleased to take Senator Forrestall's representations to my colleague. I am not aware of the context of the question, but I shall refer it to the minister.

• (1440)

JUSTICE

SALE OF AIRBUS AIRCRAFT TO AIR CANADA—ALLEGED CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD FEDERAL GOVERNMENT—RANK OF RCMP OFFICERS ENGAGED IN INVESTIGATION

Hon. Richard J. Doyle: Honourable senators, my questions are supplementary to questions asked by Senator LeBreton and are directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate.