

Oral Questions

[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

INQUIRY WHETHER CONSUMER COUNCIL WILL REPORT PUBLICLY

Mrs. Grace McInnis (Vancouver Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the charges of the former chairman of the Canadian Consumer Council that faceless senior civil servants hiding behind the skirts of the minister are effectively varying the idea of a council that would report openly to the public instead of secretly to the minister, does the minister intend that the revived council will protect consumers by open reports or does he intend to set up a body whose opinions will be those of his department?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, its job will certainly be to help the consumer and its opinions will, hopefully, be those of the members of the council. The hon. member will be able to assess the potential of the council when an announcement is made about it in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will be recognized for a supplementary and then the hon. member for Egmont.

Mrs. MacInnis: In view of the importance of assessment before the event rather than after, and in view of the fact the minister will be setting up this revived council within two weeks, will he in the meantime make a ministerial statement to the House on the functions and powers of this proposed revived council?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I think the appropriate time to do that will be when the membership of the council is announced.

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MANPOWER

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH PROJECTS—NATURE OF CONSULTATION ON PRIORITIES—REASON FOR DISCONTINUANCE OF CONSTITUENCY ADVISORY GROUPS

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. It is with regard to the letter sent to all members last week concerning the selection of Opportunities for Youth projects this year. In view of the surprising change or reversal from the previous decision-making process both for LIP and OFY where there was involvement of people from each of the constituency areas in the decisions on priorities with regard to projects, will the minister indicate why this reversal took place and whether this will not create an enormous number of problems for his department and, in addition, place Members of Parliament in the position of having to decide the priority of projects, which I think would be most improper?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the practice under Local Initiatives, we gave very great weight to the recommendations of Members of Parliament, although the

[Mr. Lalonde.]

finalization in the main was through constituency advisory groups. Quite frankly, we did not set up the advisory groups for OFY this year because of two practical problems. One is the question of time in getting the processing finished. The other is the question of the amount of money spread across the country. However, we will be consulting local people through our departmental officials and we will be consulting Members of Parliament to get their views, although I will take the ultimate responsibility for approval or rejection of any project.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): In order to alleviate the considerable fears among young people that this whole situation will involve a considerable amount of politics, either at the bureaucratic or partisan level, is the minister willing even at this late date to receive submissions from various members with regard to setting up acceptable constituency groups to avoid this kind of influence peddling from in fact taking place?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I do not think there will be influence peddling. I would certainly find it very difficult at this stage to readjust to make constituency advisory groups possible. I would be delighted if the hon. member would get in touch with me and give me specific recommendations that can be looked at, although we have to get on with the process of getting these projects under way.

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ENERGY

FUNDY TIDAL POWER—AVAILABILITY OF REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT—ALLEGATION BY NOVA SCOTIA PREMIER OF INEXCUSABLE PROCRASTINATION

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Prior to the recess the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources informed me that the re-examination report on Fundy tidal power would be made available shortly after the first ministers' conference, probably about the end of January. Unfortunately the minister is not here today. Following the first ministers' conference the premier of Nova Scotia accused the federal government of inexcusable procrastination as far as the re-examination report is concerned. Will the Prime Minister consult with the premier of Nova Scotia to bring him up to date on the facts in relation to the re-examination report and when it will be made available?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I cannot give the hon. member a date. The House does know that very shortly after the first ministers' conference the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources departed for Washington and then proceeded on a very important tour of the oil producing countries in the Middle East. It is no doubt because of this that the delay has taken place. As to this morning he had a meeting in Montreal and has been delayed by the weather. He is due in the House any moment. I hope he will be able to give the hon. member an answer either later today or some other day.