

Oral Questions

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would, of course, be very pleased to meet with the Treasurer of Ontario with respect to the important subject of mining taxation. I hope such an opportunity will arise in the near future. As the hon. member will recognize, a decision was taken at the first ministers' conference that the finance ministers and resource ministers of the provinces and of Canada should meet with a view to examining fiscal arrangements and other questions which affect the important mining industry.

As to the specific question the hon. member asked with respect to offshore refining, particularly by Falconbridge, I believe he is fully aware of the importance of this matter to the Falconbridge operation.

Mr. Rodriguez: Bearing in mind that the minister met with his provincial counterparts not so long ago with a view to developing a national mining strategy, can the hon. gentleman tell us whether this sort of tax concession has been discussed in general and, further, how it fits within the concept of a national mining strategy which, surely, ought to put long-term Canadian interests first?

Mr. Gillespie: As I am sure the hon. member realizes, questions of precise tax policy fall within the purview of the Minister of Finance rather than within my own portfolio. From the point of view of the provincial governments, I might suggest that it is the mines ministers who can make recommendations, but it is the finance ministers who consider those recommendations.

Mr. Rodriguez: One final supplementary. Can the minister tell the House whether he, personally, supports that sort of tax concession to multinational mining companies which sell out Canadian resources for ever and ever?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Moncton.

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POST OFFICE

REQUESTED IMPROVEMENT IN POSTAL SERVICES

Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the new Postmaster General, not to the minister who is presently Solicitor General. There are some serious answers I should like to get. When will the Postmaster General do the following: first, provide complete postal facilities for Riverview, New Brunswick, which has 16,000 inhabitants and is one of the fastest growing communities in the maritimes; second, when will he provide house to house delivery in all built-up areas—

Mr. Speaker: Order. If every member were permitted to use the question period to make representations about constituency problems, I am sure we would have to deal with 265 different questions every day.

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

[Translation]

SHIPBUILDING

FUNDS FOR REFIT AND CONVERSION OF SHIPS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Raynald Guay (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence a question which I put last week but which was not answered. In view of the alarming situation at Davie Shipbuilding Ltd., where there have been nearly 2,000 lay-offs and where the situation is growing progressively worse, I would like to ask the Minister of National Defence what he intends to do in view of the many pressures that have been exerted on me and on him by organizations and municipal councils in my region to make funds available for the refit and conversion of ships in the Canadian fleet of his department.

[English]

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): We have tried to accelerate the ship refitting program to increase the flow into the dockyards, though we cannot accelerate it as fast as I would wish. However, I am able to say, in response to the hon. member's present and previous representations, that work on one of our ships, the *Protector*, could begin at an earlier date than has been suggested. The specifications are now ready, enabling the Department of Supply and Services to invite tenders as soon as possible. Hopefully, we can bring that ship into dock for refit in the latter part of May.

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HEALTH AND WELFARE

ESTABLISHMENT OF GERIATRIC CHAIRS IN MEDICAL SCHOOLS

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the rapid aging of the Canadian population, resulting in increasing demands on health care, what steps is the hon. lady taking to encourage the establishment of geriatric chairs in medical schools so that a larger number of doctors may be trained in this field?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I did receive notice of the hon. member's question, but I am not yet ready to answer appropriately. I should like to give him an answer tomorrow or privately later this afternoon.

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[Translation]

PENITENTIARIES

ST. JÉRÔME—PROGRESS REPORT ON HOSTAGE-TAKING INCIDENT

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Solicitor General, and I hope that in this