

● (1450)

### SUPPLY AND SERVICES

REQUEST FOR UPDATE ON INTER-MINISTERIAL MEETINGS—  
FINAL PAYMENT TO METRIC OVERVIEW BOARD NOT RECEIVED

**Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano):** Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the minister responsible for supply and services. Can the minister update us on the inter-ministerial meetings which have been taking place pertaining to services performed and delivered to the letter of the contract, for which payment has not been received? I am specifically asking for further information on the Maritime Agencies affair. Perhaps at the same time the minister could advise us as to why the Metric Overview Board has not received its final payment for services rendered.

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services):** Madam Speaker, with reference to the involvement of the Metric Overview Board I would be pleased to look into that matter and advise the hon. gentleman further.

In terms of the MAL matter, as the hon. gentleman is very well aware because of his own interest, that matter is under constant supervision. I am in contact and my office is in contact with the officers of MAL on almost a daily basis. I hope to be able to advise the hon. member on progress in the very near future.

The hon. gentleman may be interested in knowing that the third ship, the *Jasmine*, has now completed loading and is on the high seas.

**Mr. Huntington:** Madam Speaker, the issue here is very serious. The carriage contractor, Maritime Agencies Limited, has performed all services to the letter of the contract, and I have had that word from advisers directly to the minister. The problem is that the Canadian Wheat Board did not deliver the product to the ship as it lay in the berth. Is there something which is interfering with respect to the sanctity of contracts here? Every time we come back to this issue, something new comes in from left field to interfere with the process of payment. Surely the minister has had enough time now since 1978 to bring into place a payment mechanism which would relieve this company from serious potential damages?

**Mr. Blais:** Madam Speaker, the hon. gentleman has identified that there have been some matters in contention since 1978. He is also aware that indeed legal process has been commenced, and therefore he understands that I cannot comment in terms of the 1978 events. In terms of more recent events, as the hon. gentleman knows, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and I are presently in consultation in order to reach a solution as rapidly as possible.

### Oral Questions

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

#### INQUIRY AS TO DATE OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGET

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. I believe I heard him say that he had been having discussions with a cabinet colleague regarding budgetary preparation, I believe he said this morning. Does that mean that the Minister of Finance is now involved in budgetary preparation, and can he give the House of Commons a date on which a budget will be presented to this House?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, as the right hon. gentleman knows, the process of budget preparation is a long one. He knows that probably better than I do. I am engaged in that process at the present time but, unfortunately, I am not in a position today to indicate when the budget will be presented, although it has been my desire to present such a document as soon as all the complex factors can be brought under control.

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, I take that as a commitment for a budget by 1990, but the Minister of Finance will know from having watched the question period that his Prime Minister was unwilling to give us a commitment the other day. Even given the rate of inflation and the rate of unemployment in the country he was unwilling to give us a commitment that, if it was not going to be possible for us to have a budget in the early fall, there would be an economic statement indicating the general policy directions of the Government of Canada before the end of the summer. I wonder if the Minister of Finance has now had an opportunity to reconsider that exchange and whether he could give us a commitment that, if there is not a budget in the early or mid-fall, there will be an economic statement before the end of August.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Madam Speaker, I remind the right hon. gentleman that on April 21 I presented an economic statement to the House. Hon. members opposite have insisted on calling it a budget. Incessantly it is called a budget, and I wonder why another one is required. But I remind the right hon. gentleman that just very recently the New Democratic Party presented a motion to the House which included a vote, and on that occasion I gave quite an extensive summary of the economic situation and certainly the present attitude of the government. I remind the right hon. gentleman further that that happened within three or four months of our election to office, which did not happen in the government of which he was the leader.

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### LABOUR DISPUTES

NEWFOUNDLAND FISHING INDUSTRY—INQUIRY WHETHER  
SALTFISH CORPORATION TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL VESSELS

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. In view of the present fishing industry dispute in