

VETERANS AFFAIRS

PRORATA PENSIONS FOR WIDOWS OF DISABLED VETERANS— INFORMATION PROGRAM

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the acting Minister of Veterans Affairs. Because of the phased-in lowering of the 48 per cent disability entitlement in Bill C-40, approximately 1,500 widows became eligible for pensions in 1980. As of December, 1980, the Department of Veterans Affairs had heard from fewer than one third of these widows inquiring about their eligibility.

Can the minister tell the House if he has formulated a plan for contacting these other widows to make them aware of the fact that they now have a pension entitlement?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence and Acting Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, I understand the concern of the hon. member about the question of veterans' widows' pensions. I think the department is doing everything it can to contact these widows. Information is being made available in different parts of the country to make these people aware of the possibility of pensions for them.

Mr. McKenzie: Madam Speaker, can the minister assure the House that because of the relatively simple procedure for establishing the eligibility of these widows, their pension applications will be processed with a minimal waiting period? The minister says he thinks the department is taking action. Will he make sure that the department is taking action?

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, I will make sure that what the hon. member is asking will be done within the least possible time.

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NATIONAL HARBOURS BOARD

STUDY OF DALHOUSIE AND BELLEDUNE, N.B., PORTS

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Restigouche): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In view of the long awaited information with respect to the ports policy which was introduced a couple of years ago, in view of the difficulties we are experiencing at the two ports in northern New Brunswick at Belledune and Dalhousie—but specifically Belledune—and in view of the negligent attitude and inattention on the part of the National Harbours Board, particularly the gentleman at Saint John who is responsible for that port, I wonder if the minister could indicate when we might receive some information in this House regarding the long-awaited news with respect to the direction of ports, and if he could indicate that there will be some action taken with respect to having the National Harbours Board bring forward the study which was commissioned a year and a half ago on the port at Dalhousie and the port at Belledune.

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, with respect to the ports policy as a whole, progress is being made now. The policy should be ready for cabinet study in the next month or so, or possibly even earlier than that.

With respect to Belledune and Dalhousie, I will consult the National Harbours Board and make a personal report on that subject to my friend.

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TRADE

IMPORTATION OF JAPANESE AUTOMOBILES—INQUIRY RESPECTING QUOTAS

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The minister will know, as a result of a recent meeting he had in Canada with Japanese minister Tanaka, that he was unable to negotiate any arrangement with the Japanese for the fabrication of Japanese automobiles in Canada. He will also know that for some long time now the Japanese have been very successful, through non-tariff barriers, in excluding the importation into Japan of Canadian manufactured goods. He will also recognize that the Japanese share of the North American automobile market has been increasing apace.

In light of these facts I would like to ask the minister whether it is possible that the government is now considering the imposition of quotas on the importation of Japanese automobiles to Canada.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, when it comes to investments by Japanese companies in North America, including Canada, it should be borne in mind that the Japanese automotive industry is not owned or controlled by the Japanese government. It is in the private sector. In spite of this, and I quote from the official press communique of Mr. Tanaka's visit: "Mr. Tanaka said his government was sympathetic to these Canadian objectives," one of them being increased Japanese sourcing of parts in Canada and investment in automotive facilities, "and would encourage Japanese automotive manufacturers to respond positively."

● (1500)

Also, during Mr. Tanaka's visit he confirmed that the agreement between the United States and Japan on access to sourcing by the Japanese telecommunications entity would be available to Canada on a non-discriminatory basis thus making available to Canadian companies the opportunity to bid on some \$3 billion worth of manufactured goods. In spite of the continuing problems my hon. friend has mentioned, I think we are making progress.

When it comes to the matter of quotas on Japanese vehicles, the U.S. International Trade Commission, in spite of the higher levels of penetration of Japanese imports into that country, did not find injury nor did it recommend quotas.