

Oral Questions

FINANCE

COLLECTING OF CERTAIN COINS BY AMERICANS FOR
MELTING IN UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF SILVER
CONTENT—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I brought to the attention of the Minister of Finance what I termed a racket whereby Americans come to Canada, gather up our silver coins, take them to the United States and then melt them and make a very large profit. Will consideration be given to an order in council being brought in, similar to the one in effect in 1970 and set aside in 1971, to prevent this racket continuing?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, at the instance of my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, an order in council was passed by the government this morning under the Export and Import Permits Act placing silver coinage bearing pre-1968 date on the export control list.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister for the alacrity with which action was taken. Can he give any general idea of the amount that may be exported without having a permit? Has he that information available at the moment?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): It would be very difficult to trace, Mr. Speaker, because the purpose of this type of export would be to melt down the silver. I cannot give any more information to the right hon. gentleman who on this issue has been as bright as a silver dollar.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

BENEFIT CONTROL—ALLEGED USE OF IMPROPER
METHODS BY OFFICERS IN OBTAINING STATEMENTS—
INVESTIGATION BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and is supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Hamilton West. In view of the statement by Parkdale Community Legal Services that unemployment insurance benefit control officers are using unacceptable methods to exploit immigrants who do not speak English very well as a method of disqualifying them, will the advisory committee be conducting a detailed investigation into this aspect before it reports to him?

• (1430)

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would find such activity on the part of benefit control officers to be as reprehensible as the hon. member finds it. As I indicated in my previous answer, the allegations of Parkdale Community Legal Services are to be investigated by the advisory committee and contact is being made by the chairman of the advisory committee with the people who prepared the report.

[Mr. Cafik.]

BENEFIT CONTROL—CONSULTATION WITH LABOUR
LEADERS

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. Will the minister say whether or not his department plans to get together with leaders of the labour movement with a view to working out some agreement in this matter that will be acceptable to all parties?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, of the members of the advisory committee four are representatives of the labour movement. They are working diligently with the four representatives of management under the direction of their capable chairman, Mr. Anatole Lesyk.

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POWER

PROPOSED FLOODING OF SKAGIT RIVER VALLEY—
NATURE OF AGREEMENT WITH UNITED STATES
RESPECTING POWER PROJECT—CANADIAN POSITION

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. On April 3 the Minister of the Environment said, concerning the Skagit River, as found on page 2943 of *Hansard*:

We have now had a reply from the United States State Department officials. They agree, in principle, to the convening of a meeting or a series of meetings with the two principal parties with a view to terminating a longstanding contract.

Yesterday Mr. Vickery, superintendent of Seattle City Light, held a press conference and stated that he had been assured by Rufus Smith, United States Undersecretary of State for Canadian Affairs, that no agreement has been reached to end the project.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. A question should not be posed in those terms. I think the hon. member might like to come to his question now.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell the House whether the United States government has officially assured the government of Canada that the only question to negotiate is the question of compensation?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot give that assurance to the House. The main purport of the statement I made was that an agreement had been reached between the two countries to hold meetings between the principal parties, British Columbia and Seattle City Light, with the purpose from our point of view, of terminating the agreement.

Mr. Fraser: Today Mr. William Johnson of the United States Embassy advised me that the official American position is that of Seattle City Light. In view of that, can the minister assure the House that Canada has delivered to the United States government notice that Canada will not permit the flooding?

Mr. Davis: Yes, Mr. Speaker.