

Oral Questions

CAPABILITY OF ENERGY BOARD TO JUDGE APPLICATION TO TRANSPORT NATURAL GAS IN OTHER THAN VAPOUR FORM

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The minister has informed us on a number of occasions that the department is studying alternative methods of transporting natural gas from the north, methods alternative to transporting it in the vapour state. Is the National Energy Board, should it be seized with this information officially, capable of rejecting an application to transport it in the vapour state—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have the impression that the hon. member is asking the minister to express an opinion, in the sense that he might be asked to interpret a statute. In these terms the question would be out of order.

Mr. Rowland: May I rephrase it, then?

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member might be allowed to do that. But we are running short of time. I suggest that hon. members should limit the number of supplementaries and make them as brief as possible.

Mr. Rowland: I believe the gist of my question was understood. I would therefore ask the minister whether the National Energy Board is capable of making that kind of judgment?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): From its membership, plus additional advice which has been and will be obtained, the board has the competence to make that kind of judgment.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

INCREASE IN ADMINISTRATION COSTS—INQUIRY AS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT ON RELATED MATTERS

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the minister responsible for the Unemployment Insurance Commission. In light of the fact that administration costs have increased from \$26 million in 1971-72 to \$128 million in 1972-73, an increase of some 400 per cent, and in view of the fact that the budget for 1973-74 is set at \$144 million, can the minister advise the House whether he has pushed the advisory committee to the UIC with a view to getting its report on related matters dealing with a proposed new act as soon as possible in order that it might be possible to bring in legislation which would save the taxpayers \$100 million as stipulated by the minister earlier?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I am asking the advisory committee on every possible occasion to report on those matters placed before it. I must say I suspect that the \$100 million to which the hon. member has referred is not related to the administrative costs which he mentioned earlier. There is quite a difference.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

Mr. Alexander: In view of the rapidly rising cost, can the minister say whether he is keeping in mind the advice he received from his colleagues on the front benches and whether, in fact, the administrative cost has reached its peak, having in mind the policies of the government in relation to employment and so on?

Mr. Andras: I would hope the administrative cost has reached its peak. As I explained recently in another place, about half the increase in administrative costs compared with 1972 is due to increases in wages reflecting the general increases which are taking place in the public service. A further \$10 million to \$12 million is related to expansion and to decentralization of the service, something which I understand has been applauded or looked forward to by all hon. members.

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● (1440)

GRAIN

REDUCTION IN FREE TIME ALLOWANCE FOR LOADING—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF SUFFICIENT BOXCARS AND NO ADDITIONAL CHARGES TO FARMERS

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I have a question I should like to address to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. In view of the fact the Canadian railways intend reducing the free time allowance for loading from 48 hours to 24 hours on July 1, 1973, and in view of the fact that this reduction arises from an apparent shortage of boxcars, would the minister assure the House, first, that an adequate number of cars will be made available to transport grain to export positions so it is available for loading when ships are available and there will be no additional costs or demurrage charges and, second, that there will be no additional charges levied against the farmer at local points resulting from the reduction in loading time?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the obvious purpose of such a change is to assure that cars are used as effectively and efficiently as possible by allowing them to turn round very quickly. The hon. member's concern about movement of grain should be met by the figures indicating that the record movement is continuing. Even in the month of May, notwithstanding that two bridges on the CNR line were out for a while and a slowdown on the CNR, another all-time record month of loadings onto ships was set.

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FISHERIES

REQUEST THAT CERTAIN DESTROYERS BE TURNED OVER TO DEPARTMENT FOR FISHERIES PROTECTION PURPOSES

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the Prime Minister's reply to my question on Friday in which he stated that the government has to keep the budget within a rate of escalation that is considered to be reasonable, and the statement of the Minister of the Envi-