

Oral Questions

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would hope by the end of this year, or at the very latest, the early part of next year. I should add that the interest of the hon. member is appreciated. By and large, discussions with the provinces have gone very well. They are desirous of participating with this agency, as are many in the business and labour communities.

Mr. Symes: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister can inform the House as to whether he has agreement from all provinces to participate in this centre? Because a lot of provincial jurisdiction will be involved, what kind of muscle will this centre have? Will it merely be an advisory kind of body?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, it is not an invasion in any sense of the word on provincial jurisdiction. In a sense we have a responsibility to our own workers in federal jurisdiction. Because of substantial resources and expertise within the various government departments already devoted to this subject, we are proposing that they be brought together and co-ordinated through one institute which can marshal the resources, the research and the expertise necessary to stay on top of new and exotic noxious substances. They are always being introduced as new technology comes into place within the manufacturing industries and industry in general. In that sense, we are trying to stay contemporaneous with new developments in the work place and to protect the workers against harmful effects to which the hon. member has just referred.

To reiterate, there is no invasion on provincial jurisdiction. I have talked with ministers of some provinces and my officials have talked with them as well. The ministers to whom I have spoken have welcomed this initiative very much. If it has the participation of the provinces under the aegis of the federal government—business, labour and some type of tripartite apparatus—then their findings will have tremendous political momentum behind them for implementation and for acceptance within the general community.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SKAGIT VALLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA—ACTION TO ENSURE NO FLOODING—POSSIBLE REVIEW OF AGREEMENT TO RAISE ROSS DAM

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs. I am wondering if he can tell us what action the government is taking to ensure that the Skagit Valley in Canadian territory is not flooded, as a result of a decision by Seattle Light and Power to raise the Ross Dam in the State of Washington?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should be glad to make inquiries on this and communicate directly with the hon. gentleman.

[Mr. Symes.]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I should like to have the answer on the record. While the minister is inquiring, I wonder if he could inquire also as to whether the government can give the assurance that it supports the government of British Columbia in its efforts to have a second look at the International Joint Commission agreement under which the Ross Dam was to have been raised, as underlying this present dispute?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to make that inquiry as well.

* * *

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM

DATE OF STATEMENT ON DECONTROL

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. As the minister has indicated on several occasions that he will be making a statement before the end of July with respect to the decontrol phase the government might be considering, could he indicate today more definitively when that statement will be made?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I will go to see my counterparts in the Atlantic provinces to discuss their approach to decontrol. On Wednesday I will see the government of Quebec, which will mean by that time that we will have consulted with all ten of the provinces. I anticipate bringing this matter before my colleagues in cabinet toward the end of the month. Naturally it will depend on the outcome of the cabinet decision, but I hope to be able to make it not later than the departure of cabinet for the summer at the end of the first week of August.

* * *

● (1500)

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—FACTORS WHICH WILL SLOW RATE OF INCREASE

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. As prices are increasing at an annual rate of 10 per cent over the first six months of this year, can the minister tell the House what factors he expects will slow this very rapid inflation; and in general can he tell the House whether he still sees the “underlying trend to lower inflation” that he saw in his last budget?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): In general, Mr. Speaker, yes. The fact is, of course, that in the first six months of this year food prices increased because of the increase in the cost of imported food. We feel that those costs by now have been absorbed into the system, indeed that Canadian foodstuffs will be coming into the consumer market within the next few weeks and that we should see a reduction on that side. I would have to recognize, on the other hand, that