

Oral Questions

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the story from which the hon. gentleman has quoted indicated, that material will not be released to us until later this month.

Mr. Fraser: That's pretty good.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, as the OECD figures indicate that a further 75,000 Canadians will be added to the one million out of work already during this year and next, maintaining our lead as the number one OECD major country for unemployment, would the minister indicate if this project is enough to cause him to change his budgetary stance and allow a personal income tax cut in this country which could be afforded if there was more government restraint?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out to the hon. gentleman, the figures that that reporter has referred to have not yet been made public. Considering the past performance of that particular reporter, I caution all hon. members to consider with care any of his reports in this regard. I will be participating at the OECD meeting and we will be glad to pursue with OECD officials the analysis, not only for Canada but also for the other OECD member countries.

● (1450)

With respect to the concept of the tax cut, I find the hon. gentleman's representation a little hard to understand, since he voted against one just a few weeks ago.

GOVERNMENT BOND ISSUE—EFFECT ON INFLATION

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, another question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the data released today regarding the \$1 billion fresh bond issue put out by the government of Canada, would the minister indicate if he feels it is inflationary or not that the Bank of Canada, which institution is responsible to him, has purchased a net \$178 million of that issue which would appear to be monetizing the debt still further?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): The hon. gentleman really plays both sides of the river. At one point he is critical of the government for not taking reflationary steps, for example by running a higher deficit, and the next minute he is insisting we should cut it down. I wish he would get his stories straight one way or the other.

Mr. Stevens: You will not get away with that, Donald.

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ENERGY

NEWFOUNDLAND—HYDROELECTRIC POWER—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

[Mr. Stevens.]

The Secretary of State for External Affairs last Monday made a speech in St. John's, Newfoundland, in which he said that the federal government had presented to Newfoundland a "comprehensive package" to develop the hydro power potential of Labrador as a "number one priority" in helping to solve Canada's energy crisis. I ask the minister whether such a comprehensive package has been presented to the government of Newfoundland, and what are the elements of that package? Does it include financing of transmission lines and hydro site work, loans or grants for payment of equity, and does the minister agree that this is a number one priority of the government of Canada?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): The principles of the package of benefits and development of generation and transmission of power with respect to Gull Island and with respect to the hydro resources in Newfoundland and Labrador were discussed with the premier and his delegation. At that time it was agreed he would have work done which would be presented to us so that we could take the particular discussion a step further.

Mr. Crosbie: The statement of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, a senior cabinet minister, is that a comprehensive package to develop the hydro power of Labrador has been presented to the government of Newfoundland. The minister of mines and energy of Newfoundland has said that no comprehensive package for the development of Labrador hydroelectric power has been presented to the province by Ottawa. Does the hon. gentleman agree that the Newfoundland minister is correct, that no comprehensive package has been developed, and that his colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs has misled the public of Newfoundland by the statement he made?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

RETURN OF MINISTER OF SUPPLY AND SERVICES

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. Can the Acting Prime Minister advise the House of the approximate date of the return of the Minister of Supply and Services, keeping in mind that there are a number of questions which hon. members would no doubt wish to ask that minister? We would not want to be left in the position of thinking that perhaps the minister's visit to another continent would last beyond the expiration of this session.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): I am sure the Minister of Supply and Services will appreciate the hon. member's desire to have him back in Ottawa. I think he will be back at the end of the week.