

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, unfortunately my memory is not good enough to remember what happens at each of the thousand airports for which I have some responsibility. However, with respect to Boundary Bay the decision was made some months ago that the Department of Transport would go ahead and make the changes that were necessary. If my memory serves me well, there was \$10 million worth of changes that had to be made before we could get someone to operate it. As far as I know, these expenditures have been made, are being made now, and we are looking for the operator.

The latest information I have is that we were on the verge of getting one. I will check this and I will send a letter at four o'clock this afternoon to my hon. friend to give him a blow by blow account of what has happened.

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#### FINANCE

##### REQUEST FOR TAX RELIEF FOR FORESTRY AND MINING INDUSTRIES

**Mr. Lorne McCuish (Prince George-Bulkley Valley):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The Minister knows that the forestry and mining industry are the principal employers in British Columbia. He also knows that these industries rely heavily on sales to foreign markets and that the loss of foreign sales has resulted, in great part, in the 20 per cent to 30 per cent unemployment figures which are prevalent throughout B.C.

The competitive edge in foreign markets has been lost, due in large part, to crushing tax measures imposed by his Government. Will the Minister now accept the fact that his Government's make-work programs just do not work in these two industries and are unacceptable to them? Will he consider using equivalent funds as tax relief to the wood and mining industries in order to allow them to operate and have a fighting chance in foreign markets?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I would tell him that the first consultation I had in preparation for my budget was with the representatives of British Columbia industry, particularly the mining and wood industries. Those discussions have been quite productive. I must say, however, that it is not the tax burden on those companies that has created the problems they are facing. As a matter of fact, the tax burdens on the mining and wood industries in this country compare very favourably with almost any competitor. The fact is that there has been a lack of demand generally for products of the mining and wood industries all around the world. We should recognize the situation in the world today where employment in the mining and forestry sectors has declined substantially.

#### Oral Questions

As a matter of fact we are providing such comparatively excellent advantages to our industries that my hon. friend knows there are complaints in the United States that we are favouring the soft wood lumber industry too much. I am going to Washington this week where I intend to have a few words with my American friends in that regard, to ask them to pay attention to the Canadian situation and recognize that we are not unfairly subsidizing the soft wood lumber industry in this country.

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#### PORTS

##### SURREY, B.C.—APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT

**Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board, who may know that the port of entry at Pacific Highway in Surrey is the busiest west of his own City of Windsor. The facilities are overcrowded and obsolete. Just last week I received a letter from the Minister of Public Works saying that the design for a new structure will be completed next week. He went on to say:

Assuming a favourable review by Treasury Board, a construction contract could be awarded as early as January, 1984 which would result in a completion date of January, 1986.

In view of the fact that unemployment in British Columbia had the fastest rate of increase during the past year, could he assure the House, the people of Surrey, and the businessmen who use that port of entry, that Treasury Board will in fact approve that construction contract so that we will face some employment prospects there, and so that the business people using that port of entry will see some cost efficiency in the operation?

**Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board):** Madam Speaker, I will be very happy to look into the matter to see what can be done to expedite consideration of the submission. I note with interest my hon. friend's support for the increasing and speedier expenditure of public funds.

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#### METRIC CONVERSION

##### APPLICATION TO GOVERNMENT FUEL PURCHASES

**Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I understand that his Department declared on Monday of this week that mandatory metrication "obviously does not apply to the Government". We all know it is true that international standards for many items are not in metric. To say the private sector must convert despite this, whereas the Government is free to do as it pleases, is sheer hypocrisy. How