

Oral Questions

REQUEST FOR ELIMINATION OF REGIONAL PAY
DIFFERENTIAL—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the President of the Treasury Board. Bearing in mind that in certain regions of Canada public servants are being paid approximately 20 per cent less than in other regions, in the interests of national unity I wonder if the minister would indicate whether the government or his department plans to modify or eliminate the regional pay concept?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think it has been adequately demonstrated that the notion of regional pay is productive of rather more satisfaction than attempts to distort the reward relationship between employer and employee in any given area.

REQUEST FOR ELIMINATION OF REGIONAL PAY
DIFFERENTIAL—POSITION OF DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL
ECONOMIC EXPANSION

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the minister is not aware of the facts surrounding the regional pay rate problem, perhaps I could put this question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In view of the fact that the original reason for the regional pay rate concept was to keep wages in line with prevailing rates in industry and that in most cases prevailing rates now exceed regional pay rates in a number of areas which I could specify if time permitted, would the minister indicate whether his department has accepted the position that the regional pay rate concept is discriminatory, antiquated and should be eliminated, and is he pressing this position on the government?

● (1210)

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, without casting reflection on your office, I find it difficult to reply to that sort of question without being argumentative. I will say, however, with regard to that area which is my own responsibility, that if the hon. member will read *Hansard* of yesterday he will see that I recognize that in the Atlantic provinces in particular there is a necessity to do everything we can to increase wages in the private sector. In fact, future job incentives will be based on 30 per cent of the total payroll in an industry in the second and third years of its operations.

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ENERGY

PRICE OF HOME HEATING OIL IN OTTAWA-HULL AREA—
REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Can the minister give the House any report on the apparent price gouging with regard to home heating oil in the Ottawa-Hull area?

[Mr. Drury.]

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the hon. member's questions I have been in touch with the industry in this regard and put forward the view that the price seems to have been excessive in light of the fact that some of the feedstock was based on western oil. I now have a detailed report which I will be glad to furnish to the hon. member, indicating how the additional oil was made up and how that affects cost.

EFFECT OF CLOSING OF TORONTO-OTTAWA PIPELINE—
POSSIBILITY OF REPRESENTATIONS TO KEEP PIPELINE OPEN

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the minister arising from the question asked by the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier. Can the minister tell us why the pipeline between Ottawa and Toronto is to be closed this weekend, what effect this will have on oil prices, if any, whether fuel oil pumped through that pipeline has had a beneficial effect on oil prices and whether the minister is prepared to make representations or issue an order to keep that pipeline open?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the pipeline was used for the purpose of supplying home heating oil to the Ottawa area. We are approaching the end of the home heating season and stocks on hand are more than adequate to meet requirements. That is why the pipeline is being closed down. As I indicated, as a result of the detailed questioning of the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier I will be furnishing him with a full report on the matter, and if the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton is interested I will be glad to furnish it to him as well.

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TRADE

REASON PRIME MINISTER DID NOT MEET HEADS OF
COUNTRIES OF EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY DURING
RECENT TRIP

Mr. Peter C. Bawden (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the vital importance of Canada's trade with the European Community and the stated policy of the government to promote trade with the community, will the Prime Minister say why he did not take at least a little extra time when he was in Europe in January to meet with the heads of some of our principal trading partners in view of the fact he has not done so in Europe for some four years now?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the intent of this question is at least hypothetical. The reason why is that negotiations are going on. The Department of External Affairs, through its various representatives abroad, and other departments like the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, through their representatives and their travels abroad, have been pursuing an assiduous path of cultivating this relationship. There is a time when it will be opportune for me to go and bring to a conclusion certain negotiations. At that time I