

Oral Questions

House how this came about and what action he proposes to take to restore the power of the purse to parliament?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the response of the Minister of Labour on Tuesday would cover this point.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE**APPLICATION OF PROPOSED ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT TO CERTAIN OFFENCES UNDER ACT**

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the statement by the Solicitor General that he proposes to bring in an amendment to abolish capital punishment completely, would the Minister of National Defence clarify whether he intends to apply this to the National Defence Act, under which capital punishment applies for certain misdemeanors at the present time?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the actions of the Department of National Defence will be consistent with the over-all government policy in this respect.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**BENEFIT CONTROL—FAILURE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO MEET DURING MONTH OF JUNE—APPROVAL OF MINISTER—REQUEST FOR PERMANENT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration as a result of the startling revelation by him yesterday that no meetings were being held by the advisory committee in Toronto in June. In light of the minister's confidence in the chairman of the committee, whom he described as very conscientious, was the minister informed in advance and did he approve of the fact that four of the members of the committee would be away in June and public meetings with claimants would in effect be delayed?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, several of the members of the committee are away attending an International Labour Organization meeting in Geneva. They are part-time appointments. They are not on full-time assignments. There is no way, under the terms and conditions applicable to the advisory committee, that they could be compelled to serve full time. So we must, under these circumstances, do our best to accommodate the requirements we have placed upon them for this investigation in relation to their other responsibilities and activities. We regret the delay. It is an autonomous body making its own decisions. They are doing their best to accommodate all requests made to them.

Mr. Alexander: Did the minister know and approve of four members of the committee being away in June, keep-

[Mr. Crouse.]

ing in mind that this is an extremely urgent matter to claimants, that the committee had already investigated the commission, and there was some urgency and necessity for them to investigate the claimants? Did the minister know of this plan and did he approve of it?

Mr. Andras: I cannot impose this kind of restriction on the advisory committee. I asked them to investigate the matter without such detailed containments as the hon. member suggests. There is no way in the world that I could deny the right of members of the committee to go to Geneva or anywhere else, because they are not on that kind of assignment.

Mr. Alexander: In light of the fact it is extremely important that we have a full-time advisory committee, in light of the fact that at least four of the committee members are serving their own interests at the sacrifice of the public interest, and in view of the fact that their term of office expires on July 18, I believe, which does not leave them very much time, will the minister now remove or restructure the advisory committee in order that we can have a full-time working committee that will face up to and give answers for the specific problem to which they should have directed their attention and to which we have a right to expect answers immediately?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I would have no intention of bringing forth the necessary legislation to make this a full-time additional bureaucratic group. I do not think that is necessary. Second, I would advise the hon. member that we have taken many steps to improve the situation relevant to the investigation of the benefit control operation to which the advisory committee was assigned. I am just as anxious as the hon. member to see the advisory committee's report completed and tabled, but I would emphasize that we have not waited to take action to improve the situation to which they were addressing themselves.

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AIR CANADA**POSSIBILITY OF CENTRALIZATION OF COMPUTER OPERATIONS AT DORVAL**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In light of the telegram he received from the government of Manitoba, I wish to ask the minister if he can tell the House whether Air Canada has made a decision to create a computer centre and centralize all computer operations for Air Canada at Dorval?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this is the third time I have answered this question. The answer is no. The personnel are not going to be decreased in Winnipeg, and no function is going to be transferred to Montreal.

Mr. Orlikow: In view of the past record of Air Canada regarding assurances to its employees at Winnipeg—I refer to the overhaul base move which was denied until the move was consummated—will the minister take up