

Oral Questions

● (1420)

[Translation]

TRANSPORT

PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF DEEP SEA PORT IN LOWER ST. LAWRENCE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister.

In view of the fact that unemployment in both the Lower St. Lawrence and North Shore areas has reached nearly 31 per cent, could the right hon. gentleman advise the House whether he intends to tell the hon. Minister of Transport to put an end to the dredging work being carried out at Île d'Orléans at a cost of about \$120 million, and to invest in an underdeveloped area an equal amount to build a deep sea port in the Lower St. Lawrence area?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am sure the hon. member knows, Mr. Speaker, that the deep sea port issue has been the subject of debates and bargaining for many years. Today, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing I can add to previous decisions. The minister is still considering the issue.

Mr. Allard: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the hon. Minister of Transport.

Does he intend to meet with delegations from Rivière-du-Loup, Gros-Cacouna and Rimouski who are here on Parliament Hill today to make the government more aware of the necessity to create a deep sea port in the Lower St. Lawrence area?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I met these delegations this morning. I cannot do it this afternoon because I am leaving for Winnipeg.

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PUBLIC WORKS

GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PROTECT BANKS OF ST. LAWRENCE RIVER FROM EROSION

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for the Minister of Public Works.

Could the minister tell the House what are his department's intentions regarding the general development of the banks of the St. Lawrence River and harbour approaches? Could he tell the House whether his department is now reviewing the safety standards for the south and north shores of the St. Lawrence River, taking into account the speed and tonnage of the boats?

I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Lotbinière on a point of order.

Mr. Fortin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order because I feel that the Minister of Public Works did not know my question was addressed to him, and with your permission, I should like to put it again.

Is the Minister of Public Works aware of the answers the Prime Minister has just given, and considering those

[Mrs. Appolloni.]

answers, could the minister tell the House what are his department's intentions regarding the development of the banks of the St. Lawrence River, taking into account the speed and tonnage of the boats? Also, could the minister say whether those studies are carried out along the lines indicated by my colleague from Rimouski, in order that the St. Lawrence River, which is a tremendous inland asset, may actually be developed instead of being neglected?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, as I said to one of the hon. member's colleagues, this whole matter is now being reviewed. We realize that the St. Lawrence River could be improved, and we are at the present time looking for ways to do it.

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[English]

PENITENTIARIES

BRITISH COLUMBIA—REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HOSTAGES HELD BY PRISONERS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): A question to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that it may not be possible or desirable for him to make any particular comment, I should like to ask the right hon. gentleman whether there is any information he can give the House with respect to the difficult situation in the B.C. Penitentiary.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for putting the question in those terms. I think it shows there is a realization in the House that in this difficult situation where human lives are involved and where we are trying to find a solution, it would not be in the public interest to make statements which might increase public anxiety or cause any hysteria. I can say at this stage that we are still in communication with those prisoners who are holding hostages and that we are trying to find a solution which will save the lives of all the hostages. I do not think I can usefully add anything further at this stage though, of course, I would be prepared to take the Leader of the Opposition and the leaders of the other parties into my confidence in my office and fill them in with more details.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT—ALLEGED USE AS MEANS TO CURB INFLATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. As unemployment has now been in excess of seven per cent for a full quarter, would the Prime Minister advise the House when the government intends to stop using high unemployment as a means to try to curb inflation and to introduce policies to reduce it to a more acceptable level?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that his understanding of our policy is quite incorrect. We are not trying