

*Oral Questions***REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION****BRITISH COLUMBIA COAL DEVELOPMENT—FUTURE OF TWO MINES**

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Regional Economic Expansion, whose Government has worked very closely with the Social Credit Government of British Columbia in developing one of the few major megaprojects in western Canada. What the Government has been telling Canadians is that this will be the major job-creation project in western Canada in the months and years ahead.

• (1140)

Is the Minister aware of a recent study done by H.N. Halvorson Consultants Limited for the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority that suggests that the two major mines in the northeast coal sector, namely, the Bullmoose Mine and the Quintet Mine, because of the high price of coal that they are mining, will be mothballed likely for the next 20 years?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, first, I am not aware of the Hon. Member's allegations. But, second, if he is speaking of megaprojects in western Canada, I would hope that he would encourage his colleagues to support the Crow changes, because that is one of the biggest megaprojects ever developed in this country.

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INDUSTRY AND LABOUR ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM**REQUEST FOR EXTENSION IN PORT ALBERNI, B.C.**

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Ten months ago, the Government announced an ILAP program for Port Alberni, in the sum of \$15 million. To this point only \$3 million of that amount has been spent, creating only temporary jobs, more permanent. In light of the fact that this Program will elapse in December, and in light of the fact that the backbone of the Alberni Valley will continue to be the forest industry, is the Minister prepared to consider extending that Program, changing the criteria, so that that community, in that area, along with the Government, industry and labour, can embark on a major reforestation program, using the funds that remain, under different criteria?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I welcome the representations of the hon. gentleman. I am not aware of the exact details of what he is describing. I am therefore pleased that he has brought it to my attention. I will look into it and try to deal with it as sympathetically as I can.

I indicated to the House before that we have undertaken continuation of what, in effect, was the old employment bridging assistance program, which was oriented toward the forest industry. It may be possible that there are some elements

within that extension which could be of service to the Hon. Member. In any case I will look into the specifics of the matter and try to see what is possible to do.

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GRAIN**WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION PROGRAM**

Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It appears to the western farmers that the Government is playing politics with their money. I am referring to the Western Grain Stabilization Program, in which there are some \$900 million, and also to increasing the initial price for grain. Farmers have a very, very serious cash flow problem. Will the Government continue to hold the farmers' money—and I emphasize "the farmers' money"—and play politics with their money, or will it make it available? We have heard nothing from the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board of any positive consequences. What direction is the Government taking?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I believe I answered questions previously this week concerning the western grain stabilization fund. As the Hon. Member knows, it is basically an insurance fund, and both the farmer and the federal Government pay into the fund against the day when the cost price squeeze becomes so exorbitant that farmers lose dramatically.

Under the legislation itself, pay-outs must be considered according to a five-year average. That is not at the discretion of the Government or anyone else. That is very clearly laid out in the Bill and the statutes. The five-year average, as it is being considered now, represents some \$400 million above the five-year average pay-out and, therefore, we are not in a position to respond. However, I have said that we are reviewing the western grain stabilization fund to see whether it can be reduced to a lower three-year average, therefore providing quicker pay-outs.

We have received representations. They have been very valuable. As soon as our review is concluded the Government will move on that, but we would obviously require legislation to make the change.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**INITIAL PRICE FOR BARLEY**

Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, with regard to the Western Grain Stabilization Program, the Minister knows that it was designed not to be an insurance program, but, rather, a cash flow program. The Government is dragging its feet on this issue. With regard to the initial payment, when will the Minister announce an increase in the payment for barley? Wheat is trading at Thunder Bay at \$1.14 higher than the farmers are receiving at the grain elevators today.