

in the waters of the Pacific, which, by the way, are international waters. I firmly hope that in our negotiations with the Americans, we shall be able to establish routes that are adequately distant from the coasts involved, so that the magnificent coasts of British Columbia are properly protected. However, to guarantee such new routes a greater degree of security, the solution that would consist in setting up a port for the delivery of oil to Port Angeles would be, in my view, the most amenable one.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Is the minister satisfied with the progress the Minister of Transport has made in the development of a guided navigational system for the dangerous Juan de Fuca and Georgia Straits waters, and what has her own department done, if anything, to stock the cleaning material which would be necessary in case of a possible oil spill in such rich waters?

Mrs. Sauvé: I am very satisfied indeed with current negotiations. The Department of the Environment is also taking part in these negotiations. As I stated last Friday, these negotiations deal with vessel traffic schemes, navigational aids and storage of the equipment we would need in case of possible mishaps.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON REGIONAL PAY FOR AIRPORT FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. With regard to the treasury board's submission concerning airport fire fighters, did the government advocate the implementation of regional pay principles?

● (1450)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter under negotiation with the union at the present time. Of course, as you know, in last year's dispute in Vancouver, where the strike was illegal, there was a great deal of tension within the union. Some parts of Canada are in favour of regional rates while others endorse national rates. As far as we are concerned, to avoid useless pressures on the regions, we prefer the implementation of regional pay rates.

[English]

Mr. Muir: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's reply. He said they have not. Would he not agree that any suggestion by the government or any agency of the government in favour of regional pay rates would be a retrogressive step, particularly in areas of regional disparity.

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, the answer is not as clear as the hon. member would like it to be. A few days ago, for instance, the finance minister of an Atlantic province

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blamed the federal government for paying too high a salary to its employees, so that he was losing provincial employees to the benefit of the federal administration.

An hon. Member: Which minister?

Mr. Chrétien: The finance minister of a Tory province, New Brunswick.

[English]

SUGGESTED INCREASE IN REGIONAL PAY RATES IN DISADVANTAGED PROVINCES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the fact that regional pay rates in have-not provinces are lower than anywhere else in Canada, and in view of the fact that the cost of living is now higher in the Atlantic region than anywhere else in Canada, would the minister consider reversing the basis of regional pay rates because of this fact and increase the regional rates in the have-not provinces where the people are suffering?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, it is precisely one of the important elements determining why, under certain circumstances, it is much preferable to have a regional rather than a national rate. In certain parts of the country, the cost of living is higher than in others, and I think we should act accordingly.

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[English]

PUBLIC WORKS

DREDGING—GOVERNMENT POSITION IN VIEW OF FACT ALL COMPANIES UNDER INDICTMENT

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. Has the minister's department been able to come up with a satisfactory solution so that the Minister of Public Works and the Department of Public Works can get on with some dredging in harbours which need it very badly? I ask this because the Goderich Harbour is in immediate need of dredging.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we have been in touch with the Department of Public Works so that they can take steps where necessary.

GODERICH HARBOUR—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBILITY OF HAVING DREDGING DONE

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of the Environment. Would the Minister of the Environment have this situation investigated so that her department would be able to give the go-ahead for this harbour to be dredged as soon as the Department of Public Works sees its way clear to hire a dredge to do the job.