

Oral Questions

proposals contained in that review, there were many proposals to cut off from entitlement to unemployment insurance seasonal fishermen and other seasonal workers in places such as the Atlantic region, without at the same time in any way providing any discussion on alternatives? I think this is very important. Can he explain why this was done without discussing the alternatives?

Mr. Atkey: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that the subjects of review are many. They include seasonal workers and about ten other items. There is no intention of conducting a review simply to cut off any individual group of employees in Canada. As was indicated in the throne speech yesterday, the intention of the review of the Unemployment Insurance Act is to provide greater equity and to remove disincentives to work. That is the framework, and it includes many alternatives which I will be pleased to debate with the hon. member at the appropriate time.

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[Translation]

SPORTS

GRANTS TO UNIVERSITY ATHLETES

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the new Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport. I should like to take the opportunity to express my wish that he keep as fit as his predecessor.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the minister announced a few weeks ago that universities in the maritimes and western provinces would see travel grants for their athletes competing in Canada during the academic year 1979-80 substantially reduced, from \$450,000 to \$190,000. The \$450,000 was an amount previously agreed upon between the universities concerned and his department.

● (1450)

Could the minister inform the House whether he is ready to reconsider this drastic cut with the two university associations concerned, since their athletic program for the academic year was designed with the understanding that the federal government would give the amount already agreed upon?

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport and Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Sherbrooke. I do not think I will ever possess the same form as the previous minister.

The Canadian Interuniversity fiscal Union received \$456,000 in the fiscal year 1978-79. That was not to be a perpetual grant. It was something which was looked at, and it was to be a once-around type of grant. We discussed it with the university directors. I decided to cut down. Hon. members are aware of the restraint program: let us call it belt-tightening.

An hon. Member: Whose?

[Mr. Faour.]

Mr. Paproski: We did cut it down to \$190,000 after a considerable amount of discussion with some of the local athletic directors both from the Atlantic provinces and from the west. We decided to give them an extra \$100,000, which brings it to \$290,000.

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[Translation]

ENERGY

OIL PRODUCTS—REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT SOLVE SUPPLY PROBLEMS OF INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTORS

Mr. Pierre Bussières (Charlesbourg): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. We recall the fragile situation of the independent distributors of oil products in Quebec and we also know that the minister met the independent distributors of oil products in September. I should like to know, what are, precisely, the measures he intends to take to solve the problem of supply faced by the independent distributors of oil products, with a view to preventing bankruptcy of those independent distributors and ensuring that consumers in Quebec will have heating oil next winter.

[English]

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right in saying that there has been considerable pressure over a period of some months and over the course of the last few years with respect to the independents of Canada.

As soon as I took over this responsibility, I directed my attention to this particular, serious matter. In fact, in August of this year I wrote to all the refiners and terminal operators asking them to observe certain rules with respect to supply for independents not only in the province of Quebec but in what we might generally term eastern Canada. That particular telex asked them not to alter substantially their trade class mix, to continue to supply customers of record and not arbitrarily deny contract renewal.

On the other hand, the hon. member will appreciate the fact that the federal government cannot give ironclad guarantees that all independents will be able to stay in business. We are trying to encourage independents to enter into long-term or extended contracts so that they may, in fact, be able to be assured of supply during the course of next winter and subsequently.

[Translation]

PROPOSED ADOPTION OF LEGISLATION CONCERNING OIL REFINERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Mr. Pierre Bussières (Charlesbourg): Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the requests for the supply of heating oil which were made by the minister to the big companies were fruitless. I should like to know whether the minister would be prepared