

Oral Questions

REQUEST THAT DOCUMENTS BE TABLED

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, it is not good enough to have an in-house investigation by Members of the Cabinet. What this side wants to know is whether or not the Prime Minister will himself, on his own authority, undertake to table in this House of Commons any agreement and memorandum of understanding that he finds?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, if I understood the Hon. Member correctly in his reading of the press report, I did not understand it was a memorandum of understanding concluded with the Government of Canada.

Mr. Beatty: It is so.

Mr. Trudeau: Maybe we do not have that memorandum. It is? Well, I understood it was signed between some private parties, not the Government of Canada.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): And the Government.

Mr. Trudeau: If it is in the Government of Canada's possession, we will be able to find it very quickly.

ROLE OF PETRO-CANADA

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, Petro-Canada is a Crown corporation, an agent of Her Majesty, and its powers can be exercised only as an agent of Her Majesty. The agreement was signed with Petro-Canada, among others.

Will the Prime Minister now give the undertaking that that memorandum of understanding, if it is in Petro-Canada's possession, will be tabled in the House of Commons at the earliest opportunity?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, for all I know the memorandum of understanding may, if it exists, contain a lot of things which are not pertinent to this question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I will see. What the Hon. Members are alleging is a conflict of interest. If we find some, we will report on it, Madam Speaker. When we see the dates.

Mr. Stewart: Limber up the shredders.

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INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

DUST HAZARD IN GRAIN ELEVATORS

Miss Aileen Nicholson (Trinity): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that grain dust has long been considered a cause of serious lung disease, and that efforts over the past ten years to persuade grain elevator operators to introduce adequate controls have failed, will the Minister tell us what action he is planning to

protect the health and safety of Canadian workers in this industry?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, we are very concerned with the situation in this particular industry because it has been deteriorating over the years. While compliance with our regulations in 1980 was some 40 per cent, it fell to 25 per cent in 1981 and to less than 20 per cent last year. Therefore we have informed the industry in Winnipeg that we intend to inquire of each employer as to the situation at the present time to show cause why they have not implemented the safety regulations as they should have done. We will, of course, use every reasonable means at our disposal to look after and protect the health of the workers involved. This applies not only to dust inhalation but also to fire and explosive hazards.

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• (1450)

BANKS AND BANKING

RESCHEDULING OF LOANS TO SMALL BUSINESSES AND FARMERS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I would like to direct a question his way to allow him to get on the good side of the Prime Minister once again. It concerns Canada's chartered banks that have been enthusiastic in their efforts to reschedule Dome's outstanding debts. They have certainly not demonstrated the same willingness to reschedule loans to farmers and small businesses. We learned today that Canada's largest bank, the Royal Bank of Canada, is suing a farmer who at present is unable to meet his financial obligations to the bank and, I am sure by no coincidence, who happens to be the spokesman for a farm advocacy group opposing the bank's jackboot tactics by forcing premature foreclosure and property sales.

Is the Minister of Finance prepared to sit down and meet with the presidents of the major chartered banks of Canada to ask them if they would not provide the same service and the same enthusiasm for rescheduling loans for small-businessmen and the farmers of Canada as they are showing in their willingness to assist Dome Petroleum?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I must say first of all that I have already sat down with the presidents of Canadian banks about this very subject. I have raised it with the banks individually and I have raised it with the Canadian Bankers' Association in the course of my pre-budget consultations. I drew to their attention a number of representations I have received in that regard, and I received a commitment on their part that they would investigate any allegation of inappropriate or unfair behaviour. Since then,