

Oral Questions

INDIAN AFFAIRS

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS—DATE OF STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Inasmuch as it is well over four months since the Prime Minister indicated that a statement would be forthcoming with respect to Indian affairs, can the minister tell the House when he will be in a position to make that statement, especially with reference to the question of aboriginal rights?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Soon, Mr. Speaker.

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TRANSPORT

INCREASE IN FREIGHT RATES IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES—PROTESTS FROM PROVINCIAL PREMIERS—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. Has the minister received from the Premier of Prince Edward Island and/or the other Atlantic premiers protests against the outrageous increase in freight rates announced by the CNR and, if so, what was his response to these hon. gentlemen?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I do not remember having received any telegram worded in the way the hon. gentleman mentioned.

INCREASE IN FREIGHT RATES IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES—POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT ACTION TO OFFSET SERIOUS EFFECTS

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and is with respect to the previous question put to him by my colleague, the hon. member for Hillsborough. In light of the meeting that took place earlier this year between the minister and the Atlantic premiers over reinstituting some effective reduction of the freight rates in the Atlantic provinces, would the minister be prepared to make an announcement in this regard shortly to offset the very serious implications of the Canadian National move that will be implemented shortly?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am very anxious to do that, and I hope all those in this House who have influence will incite the Atlantic premiers to answer the proposals we have made.

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MULTICULTURALISM

REQUEST FOR PROGRAM TO ASSIST ETHNIC PRESS IN LIGHT OF POSTAGE RATE INCREASES

Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. the Prime Minister. Since the

[Mr. Speaker.]

Postmaster General refuses to relieve the weekly and periodical press from harmful postage rate increases, and to avoid the kind of selective back-door subsidies we have had disguised as a multicultural program, will the government introduce a regular program to assist the ethnic and other periodical press in Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there are many ways in which we attempt to assist the periodical and ethnic press of Canada.

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HEALTH

RESEARCH ON CONTRACEPTIVE PILL—POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN AVAILABILITY

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the fact that nine children of every 100 born in Canada are illegitimate, representing a hazardous future for themselves and a burden for the taxpayer, and as many women are reluctant to use the contraceptive pill because of its possibly dangerous side effects, could the minister tell the House what resources his department is devoting to research specifically in regard to the contraceptive pill?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will appreciate that a question of this kind ought normally to be placed on the order paper, but the minister may reply briefly. Perhaps I should put it another way: normally, a question of this kind is answered by way of a statement on motions, and the minister might indicate whether he proposes to make such a statement.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will have to go back and look at the estimates of my department to find the exact figure.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver Kingsway): May I ask whether the minister is considering improving the availability of the pill as recommended by the head of the Family Planning Association of Canada?

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, the pill, like any other drug, comes under provincial administration in terms of dispensing. This is a matter that should properly be addressed to the local druggist and to the minister of health in each province.

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POST OFFICE

RURAL MAIL CONTRACTORS—DATE OF COMPLETION OF STUDIES AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF POLICY

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Postmaster General. In response to letters and questions in the House the minister has stated that representations on behalf of rural mail contractors have been under active consideration. May I ask if the studies to which the minister referred