

Oral Questions

Canadian citizens and, if so, is the hon. gentleman prepared to increase the number of Canadian citizens taking part in this event?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): I presume, Mr. Speaker, that the question was addressed to me. I shall be happy to take under consideration the suggestion made by the hon. member.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

PROPOSAL TO BAN SPORTS FISHING IN ENGLISH AND
WABIGOON RIVERS IN VIEW OF MERCURY CONTAMINATION—
LACK OF CONSULTATION WITH NATIVES

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Since the latest health study affecting residents of Grassy Narrows and White Dog reserves shows dangerously high levels of mercury poisoning persisting in the natives of the area, will the minister, now, after years of buck-passing, demand that the government of Ontario ban sports fishing in the English-Wabigoon River system, and if Ontario fails to do so, will the federal government take unilateral action to close the river under the authority contained in the Canada Waters Act?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): My predecessor had asked the government of Ontario to ban sports fishing in those rivers and I did so as well when I met with the Ontario minister a few weeks ago. Because the Ontario government has decided to reconsider the issue—as a matter of fact a meeting took place on this subject very recently—we are awaiting the results of that meeting before proceeding further.

Mr. Symes: In view of the decision by the federal government on November 16 to abandon the idea of a national park for the area, and promises of further consultation with native leaders to seek a solution to the problem, can the minister explain why no Indian representatives from the bands were invited to recent meetings between officials of the two governments, why no officials of Indian Affairs have met with the band councils to hear their proposals for economic development on the reserves, and why not even any written communications have been sent to the chiefs informing them of developments?

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Allmand: As far as I know, that is not true. I have met with Indian leaders with regard to this problem and I understand my officials have done so as well. I do not know where the hon. member is getting his information.

[Miss Campbell (South Western Nova).]

INDUSTRY

TEXTILES—REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF SURTAX ON IMPORTED
POLYESTER YARNS

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. It has to do with the question I put to the Acting Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce on December 20 with regard to the extension of surtax on imported polyester yarns. He promised to have an answer ready before the House recessed. In redirecting my question to the minister, I should like, first of all, to wish him a merry Christmas, and then ask him whether he will assure the same festive spirit to those engaged in the textile industry by announcing an extension of the surtax which is due to expire before the House re-opens.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all those who have expressed congratulations to the hon. member, might I formally recognize the honour which she, as a member of a great and famous clan, has received?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): As to the question of the surtax, I can assure the hon. lady that this matter is receiving contemporary close examination by the government. I hope to be able to make an announcement within a very few days.

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): I thank the minister for his comments in the preface to that reply and hope the statement, when it comes, will be a positive one.

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AIR TRANSPORT

PROPOSED SERVICE FOR SIX PRAIRIE COMMUNITIES—REQUEST
FOR REPORT

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Has the minister received an assessment from the Canadian Transport Commission in connection with proposals to provide air services to six prairie communities—an assessment which was due on December 10—and, if so, when will he be announcing the carrier and the inauguration of the service?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): I have not yet personally seen the proposal, but it is now completed. I shall be looking at it as soon as possible and trying to reach the necessary arrangements with the appropriate carrier. I cannot at this point predict how long that process will take.