

● (1150)

FINANCE**SUGGESTED REBATE OF TAX ON GASOLINE TO RESIDENTS OF AREAS IN WHICH PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION INADEQUATE**

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that one of the rationalizations which the minister used on Monday night for the ten cents a gallon excise tax on gasoline was that it would encourage Canadians to use public transportation. What will those Canadians who live in rural areas be expected to do when there is not adequate public transportation, such as in southwestern Ontario? Does the government intend to take immediate action to provide adequate transportation or will there be a provision for rural Canadians to have this unfair and arbitrary tax rebated?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that matter has been brought up by the hon. member on several occasions with the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Beatty: And he hasn't done a thing.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORT**CANADA-CUBA SERVICE—DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS**

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport, I will direct my question to his parliamentary secretary. It is in reference to the long negotiations for regular scheduled air service between Canada and Cuba. Considering there have been recent important bilateral discussions, is it now possible to give an indication as to the commencement date for this very important transportation link?

Mr. Cliff McIsaac (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I know that discussions are continuing. I will take notice of the hon. member's question and report to him later.

* * *

SOCIAL SECURITY**SUGGESTED NEED FOR RECONCILING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT AMENDMENTS WITH INCOME SECURITY SYSTEM—CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare whose name was featured very prominently in the minutes of the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration when I asked the Minister of Manpower and Immigration why he had not brought in amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act. The minister replied, and I quote from page 18:12:

The fundamental reasons why we have not brought them in yet is because parallel to that development of those amendments... there is

Oral Questions

at some stage going to have to be a reconciliation and a harmonization of the interface between the Unemployment Insurance benefit program particularly, and all the ramifications of it, and the rationalization of the income security system.

My question is simply this: Has this reconciliation, harmonization and rationalization taken place?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, a committee of officials is examining this matter. I understand that a report will be submitted in the near future to the minister responsible and that the cabinet as well as the federal-provincial conference of welfare ministers will have the opportunity to study its recommendations.

[English]

Mr. Alexander: If those criteria have not been met, particularly with regard to the provinces involved, can the minister now advise whether the provinces were informed as to the probable amendments and, if so, what was their opinion? If not, because of the whole problem of income security as it relates to employables and unemployables, will the minister assure the House that before his amendments are brought in, the advice of the provinces will be sought in order that the whole program can be dovetailed, as the Minister of Manpower and Immigration indicates it should be?

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is confusing two aspects of the matter. The amendments put forward earlier differ from the present discussions on gearing the unemployment insurance program to the proposed guaranteed income program.

[English]

Mr. Alexander: It looks as though the minister is trying to evade the question. In light of the fact the minister is now seeking some sort of income security program, which calls for the involvement of the provinces and which includes unemployment insurance, before bringing in amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act, will the minister, in his capacity and as part and parcel of the approach that his colleague is taking, ensure that the provinces are involved with these amendments in order that we can have some concrete dovetailing in terms of rationalization, harmonization and reconciliation?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**CRASH OF PANARCTIC AIRCRAFT—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON RESUMPTION OF INQUEST OR FEDERAL INQUIRY**

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Kootenay): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Justice. It follows questions directed by myself and the hon. member for Northwest Territories to various other ministers over the past several months. What steps has the minister taken to see that the inquiry into the Panarctic aircrash