

PUBLIC SERVICE

REMOVAL OF HIGHLY PAID EMPLOYEES FROM BARGAINING UNITS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board, since the hon. member for Ottawa West referred to Saturday's *Globe and Mail*. Is the government considering the removal of highly paid civil servants from bargaining units? Was this a position which was placed before the provincial finance ministers on Friday, or at any other time, in order to learn their views in this regard?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the conference among the finance ministers and, where they did not coincide, Treasury Board ministers on Friday morning was devoted to the subject of public service compensation. There were literally dozens of people in attendance. We discussed the general topics of compensation, comparability, ability to pay, and certain other matters. The specific question referred to by the hon. member was not discussed.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I understand, as well, that a question was raised about government spending, and that either at the conference or at some time in the past the federal government indicated it would restrict its spending to an increase of 3.6 per cent per year. As I understand it, the province of Ontario would rather see it restricted to 2 per cent and, if I am not mistaken, Manitoba and B.C. want it to be even less than that. Would the minister advise whether that type of discussion took place, and whether it is the position of the federal government that spending should be increased by no more than 3.5 per cent or 3.6 per cent per year?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, these percentages were discussed among several of the finance ministers, including our own Minister of Finance. This was related to certain aspects of expenditures and did not apply to the totality of budgetary or non-budgetary expenditures, capital or non-capital expenditures, and so forth. As I recall, papers were made available and were public. The hon. member could have the research group of his party pull them together and find the distinctions I am making, because the implications of his comments are not totally accurate.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I might as well carry this thing through to its conclusion. I understand there are now three positions with respect to indexed pensions. One is that the federal government is thinking about capping them. The Prime Minister is in favour of indexing. Even though the Tomenson-Alexander report has not yet been tabled, it indicates dissatisfaction with the form of indexing which exists. That report recommends that pension increases be made on an ad hoc basis.

Can the President of the Treasury Board indicate whether the government has reached a conclusion, particularly in light of what the Prime Minister has stated? Is the minister waiting for the other four or five reports from the province of Ontario,

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the province of Quebec, and the intergovernmental task force? Is he waiting for them before making up his mind with respect to the position toward which the government might lean?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, no decisions have been taken. The Tomenson-Alexander report is a very complex actuarial study. It is now available, but its translation and printing have not yet been completed. As soon as those requirements are satisfied, I intend to make it available to the House. Our position will require a great deal of analysis and thought. We have a commitment to consult with the bargaining agents and the advisory committee on public service pensions. I will be very interested in the hon. member's views as to what position should be taken, when he has access to the report.

● (1452)

Mr. Alexander: We will be in the government soon.

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[Translation]

FISHERIES

GOVERNMENT POLICY RESPECTING FOREIGN TRAWLERS IN GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment.

In his press release of January 24, the minister announced that the government might charter foreign vessels to catch deep water fish in North Atlantic zones. Because of an agreement between the Canadian government and the French government, plants in Gaspésie are periodically supplied by French trawlers and one captain said recently that it will be possible one day to fish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. My question is this: is the minister prepared to tell the House whether or not he will authorize foreign ships to fish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence even though their catches are delivered to Canadian fish plants?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, at the present time the Canadian fleet is quite capable of catching useful species in the gulf. Apart from the treaty governing our relations with France, I do not intend to allow any foreign vessels to penetrate in the gulf.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

DISINTEGRATION OF SOVIET SATELLITE OVER CANADIAN SOIL—NOTIFICATION TO U.S.S.R.

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. With respect to the Cosmos satellite, has the Canadian government notified the U.S.S.R. of the discovery on our soil of a space object, or its component parts, believed to be of a hazardous or deleteri-