

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Saltzman: Since the banks operate with a minimum of competition and since such increases might spark inflationary tendencies, will the minister consider this a special case and refer it to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I will refer it to the attention of my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and I would imagine that the Prices and Incomes Commission would also be looking at the matter.

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HIGHWAYS**ALASKA HIGHWAY—DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES AND BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENTS RESPECTING PAVING**

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. In light of the increased activity in northern Canada and the Yukon and to stimulate employment, is the government now holding discussions with the American government and with the government of British Columbia about the paving of the Alaska Highway? If not, is it likely that such discussions will be held?

Hon. Arthur Laing (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government of the United States has passed a measure empowering a group of representatives of the United States to discuss the improvement of the Alaska Highway with the Canadian government. This is very good news to Canada because over a number of years we have maintained the highway at heavy cost but at a level which is inadequate if it is ever going to be a valuable highway. We are now awaiting the approach of the government of the United States, and will be most happy to discuss with them an apportionment of the costs to improve the Alaska Highway.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): With regard to the bills now before the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States concerning the apportionment of cost of paving the highway, is it the view of the Canadian government that those apportionments are acceptable?

Mr. Laing: Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend from the Yukon is referring to a private bill that has been before Congress on a number of occasions, and upon which no action has been taken. There is indication in that private bill of a certain breakdown of percentages, and I can tell him that the highway, in respect of cars and trucks at the present time, is used 72 per cent by American vehicles. If that is a indication of an approximate or fair distribution, it might be a starting point for our discussions.

[Mr. Benson.]

FINANCE**STUDENT LOANS—SUGGESTED CHANGE IN REPAYMENT REQUIREMENT**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): I have a question for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. In view of the present and expected high rate of student unemployment, will the minister consider making amendments to the student loan regulations so that students will not have to commence repayment of loans until six months after obtaining employment rather than six months after completion of studies, as is the case today?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this matter comes up for discussion each year between the provinces and ourselves. Of course, my hon. friend knows that where special circumstances exist the lending institutions can make provision whereby the repayment of a loan is deferred until the student is employed. Indeed, the repayment period can be extended up to ten years; the specified starting date can be varied by the lending institution.

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FISHERIES**PREVENTION OF FISHING BY FOREIGN DRAGGERS WITHIN 12-MILE LIMIT**

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry I should like to direct a question to his parliamentary secretary. In view of the fact that reports I have just received indicate that one area off the southwest coast of Newfoundland has been fished out by foreign druggers and that they have moved to other parts of the southwest coast and are continuing to ignore the government direction to stay outside the 12-mile limit, what action will now be taken by the government to enforce the declaration of this limit?

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I shall have to take that question as notice.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): I have a supplementary question for the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. In view of the important statement made in the House on Friday by the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, and in view of the fact that the minister is supposed to be in the House today according to the roster, and bearing in mind the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, can the Acting Prime Minister assure the House that the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry will be in his place tomorrow to answer questions on this important matter?

Hon. Arthur Laing (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I anticipated that the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry would be here today. He was in Vancouver yesterday and I was in Vancouver—