

Oral Questions

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

FORTHCOMING WESTERN ECONOMIC CONFERENCE—
REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION BY OPPOSITION MEMBERS
IN PLANNING AND MEETINGS

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. It concerns an issue I raised on April 12. In view of the Prime Minister's consultation with the four provincial leaders of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, will the Prime Minister arrange ways for western members of parliament who are not Liberals to participate in the planning and holding of this historic western economic opportunities conference?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this question has been referred to the committee arranging the conference. At this stage I cannot answer the hon. member in the affirmative. It seems that each government will have its own group of officials and advisers. There will, of course, be room at the open meetings for observers. I can tell the hon. member we will want to make sure that members of parliament and members of the provincial legislatures will be given priority in the observers' seats.

Mr. Roche: If I understand the Prime Minister correctly, the meetings will be open. Will he clarify whether all the meetings will be open or only some? Also, will there be a way in which western members of parliament can participate in planning the input into the conference as well as the actual conference?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, some of these meetings will be open, some will be in camera. I do not believe the final decision has been reached on what parts of the agenda will be open and what parts will be closed. As far as input is concerned, we as a government have welcomed input from all sources, including members of parliament from other parties. I have also written to boards of trade and other representative groups in the west to ensure that any input they want to make will arrive at my office fairly soon. I would certainly welcome representations and briefs from other parties.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

DISABILITY PENSIONS—REQUEST FOR ADJUSTMENT IN
ACCORDANCE WITH PUBLIC SERVICE SALARIES—
CABINET DECISION ON BASIC RATE

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the representation by the National Council of Veterans Associations and four provincial commands directly to the Prime Minister suggesting that veterans disability pensions be adjusted in accordance with public service salaries and not the cost of living as at present, will the Prime Minister advise the House what action the government is taking to comply with this request and whether a decision has been made by cabinet to accept the recommendation of the joint study report on the basic rate of pension?

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this question has been considered by cabinet. When the Minister of Veterans Affairs returns from Europe where he is presently representing Canada at the D-Day ceremonies he will probably want to contact the representative organizations of the veterans and in due course inform the House when a decision is finalized.

D-DAY CEREMONIES IN FRANCE—REASON NO OPPOSITION
PARTY MEMBERS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Mr. Duncan M. Beattie (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the Minister of Veterans Affairs is in France participating in D-Day observances, can the Prime Minister inform the House why no members of opposition parties were invited to participate in these ceremonies?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I cannot, Mr. Speaker, but it is certainly the custom of the government to ensure that delegations are composed of members of parliament who can find their way clear to be absent at any particular time. I do not have the precise answer in this case. I see that the acting minister does not have it either, but I will inquire.

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[Translation]

HARBOURS

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF OIL TANKER PORT ON ST.
LAWRENCE RIVER—LETTER BY ENVIRONMENT MINISTER
TO "GLOBE AND MAIL"

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Prime Minister.

I would like to ask him whether the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Fisheries was stating government policy in his letter to the *Globe and Mail* rejecting any project for the construction of a tanker port on the St. Lawrence?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen that letter; I have therefore nothing specific to say against its contents. As for the government policy, no negative decision has been taken about the construction of a tanker port on the St. Lawrence; on the contrary, I think that the discussions are still open.

● (1430)

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie. Order, please. I apologize to the hon. member. The hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton rises on a point of order.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Yukon is not here, but I have shared his point of view on numerous occasions. I believe Your Honour has frequently mentioned that you do not believe it is proper for parliamen-