

ENERGY

STEPS TO ASSURE ADEQUATE TRANSPORT OF BUNKER OIL TO CANADIAN PORTS AND DISTRIBUTION TO SHIP OWNERS

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The shortage of bunker oil supplies at Canadian ports threatens to become even more severe in December and the world shortage may cause Canadian ships, especially our large fishing fleet, to curtail operations due to a lack of fuel. Is the minister taking any steps to ensure that adequate transportation of bunker oil is provided to Canadian ports and that it is adequately distributed to Canadian ship owners?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the principal effort we will make to have adequate distribution will be dealt with by the legislation which we hope will receive first reading next week to make sure there is equitable allocation of supplies to Canadians. With regard to fuel supplies generally, the hon. member may know we have established with the cooperation of industry a substantial movement of oil from western Canada through the Panama Canal to eastern Canadian ports and we hope we will be able to sustain this volume through the winter. I appreciate the confirmation that this is a serious situation and one requiring parliamentary action.

[Translation]

SHORTAGE OF PETROLEUM BY-PRODUCTS

Mr. Jean-Marie Boisvert (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Is he aware of the alleged growing artificial shortage of petroleum products and byproducts such as paint, plastic articles and cosmetics? It seems that several citizens fear a shortage of those products in some areas of Canada.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, this is another aspect of the problem created by the shortage of petroleum products. That is why we propose to take the steps, among others, I have just enumerated in answer to another hon. member.

Mr. Boisvert: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Does the minister have the power to prevent those companies from stocking their merchandise with the view to increasing prices after having created a shortage?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, not at the present time, but it is one of those we intend to be given through the bill I alluded to.

Oral Questions

[English]

INDUSTRY

LAY-OFF OF EMPLOYEES OF HALL LAMP COMPANY

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and is in line with the one asked by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby concerning the difficulties industries are having. Is the minister aware that 350 employees have been laid off at Hall Lamp Company of Canada at Huron Park because of financial problems caused by a shortage of raw materials related to energy, and has he had his officials contact this company to see if anything can be done which would be helpful so that these 350 jobs will not be lost to the area?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I think this reflects the seriousness of the situation to which I referred a moment ago. We were in touch with the firm as recently as this morning and discussed the problem. It is related, I believe, to a temporary shortage of certain materials. Officials of the company tell us they expect to resume production in the near future.

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AGRICULTURE

FERTILIZER—DETERMINATION OF AMOUNT GOING TO UNITED STATES—POSSIBLE PRICE INCREASE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. I should like to ask him whether, in view of the fact there seems to be genuine concern by the consumers of Canada about food-stuffs, a monitoring system has been set up to indicate the amount of fertilizers that are going to the United States at the expense of Canadians and which would normally help produce a greater supply of food in Canada?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, last spring I met with the fertilizer manufacturers and I did the same thing this fall. Even last spring I seemed to be more concerned than most people about food production in Canada. Knowing full well what they could do to help, I had meetings with these people again and they did what they said they would do last fall. We know how much fertilizer is planned for domestic consumption. I made the statement that I will do everything and recommend everything to the government to make sure that there is sufficient fertilizer for domestic consumption. We are getting the figures and we will be in a position to tell the hon. member just how much fertilizer there will be for farmers in Canada and how much will be available for export.

Mr. Korchinski: After all that from the minister, may I ask him whether he anticipates an increase in the price of fertilizer to Canadians after the Americans have got it at a lower price?