

Oral Questions

issues. My question, in supplementary form, to the minister is: in the light of our commitment in the declaration signed on May 27, 1980, between Canada and Mexico regarding non-intervention, has the minister been in touch with the Mexican government regarding joint pressure on the American government?

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, no, I have not at this point discussed that with the Mexican government. I hope to have a chance of talking with the Mexican foreign minister soon, but I must say that I am not contemplating, at this point, any joint approach to the U.S. on that subject.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

PURCHASING POLICIES OF FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the minister responsible for regional economic expansion. In his absence, and in light of what the Deputy Prime Minister said today, I do not know whether to direct it to him in his responsibility for paying out all the money to Nova Scotia, or whether I should direct it to the acting minister for DREE, the Minister of Public Works. Since it concerns him, I suppose I should direct it to the Minister of Public Works.

In view of the recent news release by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion that buyers for institutions of the government in the Atlantic region are purchasing an average of 9 per cent of their goods from sources outside the region, although comparable products made in the Atlantic region are available at the same or lower prices, I wish to ask the minister what steps will be taken to encourage the various sectors of the federal government, which have substantial buying quotas, to make their purchases for their needs in Atlantic Canada from manufacturers in the region?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I would be quite happy to take the representation of the hon. member under advisement and to bring it to the attention not only of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion but, as well, other ministries that similarly may have some interaction in that particular region.

Mr. Crouse: Madam Speaker, I have one brief supplementary question because the minister himself may well be in a position to do something about this. Since the DREE survey discovered that 10 per cent of government purchases were from regional manufacturers while another 10 per cent could have been bought from Atlantic producers at a lower price than that paid, I would like to ask him why are locally produced products, priced below competition from outside the region, not being purchased, and as a suggestion for him and the rest of the government, will the government consider in future making these purchases from the lowest of public tenders, or have public tenders gone out of style under this government?

Mr. Cosgrove: Madam Speaker, again, without having notice of the question that is asked, I have indicated that I will bring the question to the attention of the minister. I assume that he is referring to the Ministry of Regional Economic Expansion in terms of purchasing. Without knowing the prices involved and the like, I feel I would have to bring it to the attention of the minister.

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FISHERIES

TABLING OF MAIN ESTIMATES AND REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

Miss Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, my question is to the President of the Treasury Board. As chair person of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, I am aware that some members of the committee are anxious to commence hearings on east and west coast fisheries matters. Can the President of the Treasury Board tell the House when the main estimates will be tabled in the House so the committee may get a reference to commence hearings?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House I will table the main estimates on February 25. That is next Wednesday.

● (1500)

Madam Speaker: I see no other course but to extend the question period today for about ten minutes in order to make up the time lost on laughing and jeering. Much of it was in good fun, and I do not object to that from time to time, but there must be a reasonable number of questioners every day in the question period.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT TITLEY TO POST WITHIN MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Madam Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Transport, who plays a piano in his office and may not know what is going on in his department. I would like to know if the minister can confirm that one Robert Titley, an executive with Voyageur Bus Company, has either been offered the position or appointed to the position of director of railway passenger service development in the Ministry of Transport.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, indeed I am aware of it. The gentleman in question passed a Public Service Commission examination. There were seven or eight other candidates, and he won. That is the way the cookie crumbled.

I am surprised that the hon. member resents the fact that a person who has been occupied in trucking can then also be