

*Oral Questions***INDUSTRY**

FEEDSTOCK PRICES CHARGED TO PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY

Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. He will know that the petrochemical industry in Canada is under continuous distress and that that distress comes from the feedstock prices that are being charged to the industry. He will know that governments account for approximately 75 per cent of the cost of the feedstock to these industries. I would ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources if he has any intention, on behalf of the Government, to change the feedstock pricing policy to the petrochemical industry.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, that issue is a very complicated one because there is no clear cut policy on that. At this time there are many people in the market place who are asking the Government to go to a policy where there would be only one price for oil, for everybody, which would be the international price. What the Hon. Member is suggesting at this time is not what is being asked of all of the Tory candidates who go to Alberta to appear in front of a court these days. I believe that the Hon. Member will have to reconcile his views on that.

I welcome views on the subject and I gather that the Opposition Party wants to maintain a Canadian price that is lower than the international price for oil. I would like to hear the views of other members of that Party.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RATIFICATION OF AGREEMENT WITH GERMANY ON TAXATION OF PENSIONS

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, but since he is not in his seat I address my question to the Minister of State for Finance. Could the Minister of State for Finance tell the House today the status of the ratification measure related to the bilateral agreement between Canada and West Germany on double taxation of pensions? This agreement was signed by the Prime Minister two years ago. Could the Minister tell us what could possibly stand in the way of having this matter finally dealt with in the House of Commons?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Hon. Member's question is a supplementary designed to follow a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I did not have notice of the question, but I do recall that the Hon. Member has raised the issue. My recollection, and it is simply a recollection, is that there were some legal difficulties with the implementation of the agreement. I will undertake to get an update on that for the Hon. Member.

CANADA LABOUR CODE

PROTECTION OF SUSPENDED SEAMEN'S INTERNATIONAL UNION MEMBERS

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. What steps does the Minister intend to take under the Canada Labour Code, or any other provision, to protect the rights of the three Canadian seamen members of the SIU who were suspended from that union? Two of them were suspended for ten years and a third was suspended for life plus 18 years, meaning that they are virtually blacklisted from working as seamen on the Great Lakes. I would say that the punishment is excessive as their only apparent crime, Mr. Speaker, was that they campaigned against the incumbent president. What steps is the Minister taking to protect the rights of these Canadian workers from this excessive kind of union activity?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member does not seem to realize that, under the Canada Labour Code, there is a provision which protects employees against termination of employment because of suspension from union membership. In addition, the Code protects union members against discriminatory application of trade union membership rules or standards of discipline. I am referring to Section 185 of the Code. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if there were any complaints to be made about violations of the Code, those complaints should be made to the Canadian Labour Relations Board for remedy.

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CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

REVISION OF CUSTOMS ACT—OPENING OF CROSS-BORDER MAIL

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. As the Minister knows, his Department, the officials of his Department, and I presume the Minister and his predecessor have been working on amendments to the Customs Act, the revision of that statute being long overdue. Is it the intention of the Minister to table in the House at some point, perhaps in the Fall, some amendments to the Customs Act, or even a new Customs Act?

Second, now that the Solicitor General has bitten the bullet with respect to mail opening under certain rules in terms of the Security Service, is it the intention of the Minister to recommend for inclusion in that statute a provision for the opening of first class mail passing through Canada Customs for the purposes of finding narcotics, contraband, and other matters that his officials have no doubt told him constitute a great problem?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I admit I am very pleased with the question put by the Hon. Member, especially since it shows the Hon.