

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when I last heard about it, the Chairman of the Commission was Mr. Forget and not the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe.

[English]

EFFECT OF POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that I am not the chairman, otherwise the report would be radically different. Will the Minister not agree that the contents of this table that come straight out of the report, which I am sending to the Minister along with the minutes of the meeting of the Commission at the end of August, indicate clearly that the Commission's recommendations will damn Canada's poorest citizens to a life of increased welfare dependence? The Minister now has those tables in front of him.

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is referring to certain documents, but I do not know where he got them. As all the Members of this House who have much more experience than either the Hon. Member or myself will agree, when a Government asks a Royal Commission to table a report, the Government must then await reception of this report before commenting how it will be applied, whatever the Opposition may say. This is what I am trying to do.

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[English]

FINANCE

LEADED AND UNLEADED GASOLINE—REQUEST FOR EQUALIZATION OF TAXES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, given the final report of the Royal Society on lead in the environment, and given the report's confirmation of the need to get lead out of the environment as soon as possible, could the Minister of Finance consider in his next Budget, if not sooner, equalizing the taxes on leaded and unleaded gasoline so that there would at least be no encouragement to Canadians to use leaded gasoline over unleaded gasoline?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Minister of the Environment that the Commission, having released its report, endorses the Minister's decision to eliminate leaded gasoline by December, 1992. That objective still remains the objective of the Minister and this Government.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Minister had paid attention to the conference this morning he would have noticed that Dr. Hare said he stood by the Royal Society's original recommendation that the switch-over be made by 1990 and not 1992. The Minister, however, has not answered my question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Government, whether it sticks to 1992 or not, consider in the meantime equalizing the taxes on leaded and unleaded gasoline so that there is no encouragement to Canadians to use leaded gasoline over unleaded gasoline? That is a question for the Minister of Finance and one that he can answer.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be advised by the Hon. Member what questions I can or cannot answer.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): What I can say to him is, yes, we have reviewed that recommendation. We tried to see whether there was a possibility of putting it into the last Budget, but we were advised by experts on this particular question that it would not have had any major effect at all on the production of leaded gasoline. For that reason we decided against doing so.

Mr. Blaikie: It is the use of it.

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CROWN CORPORATIONS

SALE OF DE HAVILLAND—POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF LAWSUITS

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. It is a very serious question. Yesterday the Minister told the House "no information was kept secret" about the huge lawsuits the Government could face from de Havilland's secret Texas deals. How does the Minister explain that there is no mention whatsoever in committee records of these lawsuits for false dealings when the previous Minister had full knowledge of them for six months?

● (1440)

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, my friend did not do his homework yesterday so I will do it for him today. On January 28, 1986, my colleague, the former Minister said: "As you can see, we have narrowed down the Government's ongoing obligation to something exceeding \$500 million, compared to the \$1.5 billion I indicated was our ongoing obligation at the present time." Once again, Mr. Speaker, this Government dealt appropriately with the matter.