

Oral Questions

Mr. Lamontagne: In addition it is affected by the rate of inflation, which goes up and down also. We all hope it will go down.

If the inflation rate goes down and the exchange on the Canadian dollar goes up, the cost of the plane will be less. If it is the other way around, the cost of the plane will be higher.

Mr. Kempling: Hurrah! We have a new minister of finance.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, it is a very simple question, and that is why I have expressed it like that.

Mr. McKinnon: Madam Speaker, I almost got motion sickness in the middle of that answer.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

COMMITMENT TO NATO ALLIES

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, the minister has just admitted the effect inflation is having on the cost of the new fighter aircraft. Last spring he was boasting to our NATO allies that we would have a 3 per cent increase in our budget in real terms. In view of the fact that the inflation rate is considerably higher than he estimated, does he now intend to bring in a supplementary estimate or does he intend this to be just another broken promise to our allies and to the Canadian forces?

[*Translation*]

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, with regard to the question as to whether or not our allies are satisfied with the performance of Canada within NATO or our defence agreements, I must say that we have not yet been criticized by our allies in this regard. I have just come back from a meeting of NATO ministers in Edinburgh, and no one seemed to accuse us of not doing our share. On the contrary, our allies were very satisfied with the way in which Canada always supports NATO statements or achievements.

As to whether or not we shall be introducing supplementary estimates for the Defence budget, I believe that what I have said will be confirmed in due time, namely that Canada is aiming at a 3 per cent growth increase rate for real defence expenditures.

[*English*]

ENERGY

IMPORTATION OF URANIUM MINED IN NAMIBIA—
GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The minister is no doubt aware that Eldorado Nuclear Ltd., under licences from the Atomic Energy Control Board, for which the minister is responsible in this House, is importing uranium ore mined in Namibia and shipped to Canada via South Africa. He should also be aware that a senior official of the Atomic Energy Control Board indicated on television on September 15 that he was unaware this was happening, but that if it was, it would be against government policy, and indeed against the law. The next day the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that no such law and no such policy existed.

Given the contradictory positions between his agency, the Atomic Energy Control Board, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, can the minister tell the House what is the policy of his department, and what is the policy of the Government of Canada?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the Atomic Energy Control Board has reviewed this position. My hon. friend refers to a statement made by one official of that particular board at a particular time. That is not a statement by the board or the policy of the board. Since then I have been advised that the Atomic Energy Control Board has reviewed all the facts and has examined the situation. The board concluded that everything done was done according to the law, and that now law was breached in Canada by Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. That is a statement made by the Atomic Energy Control Board, and I have nothing to add to it. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has stated the policy of the government on this issue generally.

ISSUANCE OF IMPORT PERMITS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, the minister is saying no that no law or no government policy was breached. Can he assure the House that his agency will not be granting any further permits to Eldorado to import uranium that is mined in Namibia, which is in violation of 1970 and 1971 United Nations resolutions, resolutions which so far have been supported in spirit by the Government of Canada?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Again, Madam Speaker, the Atomic Energy Control Board has reported that no law was breached. As far as the external affairs policy of the Government of Canada in terms of trade or other relationships is concerned, I suggest the hon. member should address his question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.