

endeavour than the traditional industries which exist in those communities.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. It has to do with the financial management and control mechanisms of the government of Canada. In view of the fact the Auditor General's last report highlighted, and indeed stressed, the very serious deficiencies in the financial management and control mechanisms of the government of Canada and recommended the appointment of a chief financial officer or controller general as well as in light of the refusal by the previous President of the Treasury Board to implement this recommendation, will the minister assure the House that he is not afflicted with the same intransigencies as his predecessor and advise what steps are being taken to implement this very important recommendation.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think I addressed myself to this very same question put by the hon. member two or three weeks ago. I will repeat for his benefit that the recommendation of the Auditor General is indeed being considered very seriously. We have taken very specific steps in the meantime. My predecessor took very important steps to appoint a deputy secretary with this responsibility within the Treasury Board and to augment the facilities of that deputy secretary to better enhance his ability to provide financial and audit management. Indeed, the whole series of measures which are now known by the House and contained in the Auditor General's bill, given first reading the other day, is further indication of concrete action that we are taking and, in fact, there will be more.

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): The Auditor General stated "I consider this the single most important financial executive job in the whole of Canada." While the minister has at least recognized the problem and has established the financial branch, the fact remains that this is not an adequate answer to meeting the deficiencies set out by the Auditor General. When can we expect the minister to table a progress report in this House on the implementation of the recommendation so that parliament and the people of Canada can see just what steps the President of the Treasury Board is taking to overcome this very serious mess?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think we are going around in circles to a degree. I already indicated and the House is aware of very specific and significant steps that have already been taken. Indeed, more

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will be forthcoming. I will seize a pertinent opportunity to acquaint the hon. member and his colleague about those details, probably on the occasion of second reading of the Auditor General's Act that is now before the House.

Mr. Mazankowski: The Auditor General has already warned Canadians that unless some basic and fundamental changes are brought to the financial control mechanisms in Canada, the day may come when he cannot give a clear certificate on the accounts of Canada. Is the minister now assuring this House that day will not become a reality or can we expect another stinging indictment from the Auditor General when he brings forth his report due to be tabled before the end of this year?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, there is an element of a hypothetical question in the hon. member's comments.

● (1430)

REASON FOR FAILURE OF ACCOUNTS TO SHOW LOSS FROM SALE OF ATOMIC REACTOR TO ARGENTINA

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the consequences of the sale of a nuclear reactor to Argentina, disastrous in terms both of morality and of the financial implications, would the minister tell us why, in the accounts of the Atomic Energy of Canada, no provision is made for the losses sustained in that sale?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): I would have to refresh my memory as to what has been tabled but I believe I am safe in saying the figures will show up before too long.

Mr. Gillies: Inasmuch as the Auditor General has already drawn attention to this omission, may we have an assurance that in the next tabling of the public accounts losses by Crown corporations will be shown?

Mr. Andras: I will certainly take that under advisement.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

PROPOSAL TO ALLOW VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT AT AGE SIXTY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Ursula Appolloni (York South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Bearing in mind the alarming increase in the numbers of unemployed youths, and because many of the older members of the labour force are physically worn out yet unable to afford early retirement, can the minister tell the House whether a study has been made of the question of allowing voluntary retirement at age 60 with relative payments under the Canada Pension Plan?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): This is a question which was studied rather exten-