

Oral Questions

do not think the hon. member should invite me to make statements that might prejudice a fair trial.

INQUIRY INTO MANDATORY SUPERVISION

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Madam Speaker, for some time now the Solicitor General has been conducting an inquiry into the effectiveness of mandatory supervision. In light of the new cause for concern across Canada due to the Olson case about the effectiveness of the entire justice system, would the Solicitor General first of all tell us if he has completed his inquiry into the effectiveness of mandatory supervision and, in light of the concern of Canadians, will he now extend that inquiry into a full public and independent inquiry into the effectiveness of the entire justice system?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that at the time of the offences which were the subject of the conviction of Clifford Olson, he was not under mandatory supervision. His warrant had expired and he was a free man.

As to the question of the study under way on mandatory supervision, that study has been completed and I have consulted with the interested members of the private sector, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and many other groups. I have their views, and I am planning to go to cabinet shortly with proposals for change.

Again, I would remind the hon. member that mandatory supervision is in the law which was established by this Parliament. Neither the Solicitor General nor any other official has the authority to change those rules outside Parliament, so that whatever changes I propose and are accepted by the cabinet will have to be brought forward to this House. When they are brought forward, which I expect in the not too distant future, I hope they will receive more prompt consideration than some of the other important changes to the criminal justice system I have brought forward in legislation to this House and which have been stalled here.

● (1450)

USE OF TRUTH-INDUCING DRUGS

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. I remind him that while Mr. Olson was out on the street he was wanted on outstanding charges in Sydney, Nova Scotia, and Williams Lake.

In view of the unusual circumstances which have arisen here, and certain questions having been raised about methods in certain areas of the administration of justice, and the perception that there were parts of the scenario about which the Solicitor General was not fully informed, has he ever been informed by his advisers whether sodium pentothal or truth-inducing drugs have been used on witnesses or accused persons?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, that is a very general question. I am aware of the use and value of that drug, but I would want to have a specific question before giving a specific answer.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

IMPACT OF TRANSFER OF FEDERAL SALES TAX FROM
MANUFACTURING TO WHOLESALE LEVEL

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I would like to ask him whether a study has been made as to the impact of transferring federal sales tax from the manufacturing to the wholesale level on the residents of northern and remote regions of our country. As the minister knows, most of the high cost of living in the north is associated with freight. The practice now, of course, will be that northerners will have to pay federal sales tax on one of the main components of their high cost of living, namely, freight. Has a study been undertaken into the cost to northerners of that particular provision in the budget, and can the minister report on it?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, we have attempted to assess the general impact upon the economy of these changes to the sales tax. It should be made clear to hon. members that there will be a great deal of opportunity to consider these changes and to examine their impacts before the legislation will be brought in and before it will be enacted.

REQUEST FOR CHANGE IN POLICY

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, as the minister knows, neither in his budget nor in his statement has he dealt with the whole question of northern benefits, knowing full well that in some areas of our country the cost of the most essential items is sometimes two and three times what it is in the more populated regions of our country and that there is in place a certain tax remission or remission order. Can the minister tell us what terms of reference will be used to develop a policy which will bring about a greater degree of equity and fairness with respect to taxation on northerners generally? What he has done so far has been to place an additional burden on northerners by virtue of moving the sales tax from the manufacturing to the wholesale level, knowing full well that there are very few manufacturing facilities in the north. Most goods are shipped to wholesalers before they are distributed.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the general effect of the changes in the sales tax we are proposing will be to benefit domestic manufacturers but, as the hon. member will recall, we did extend the remission order for an additional year. As I stated in the budget papers, it is my intention to examine what alternative instruments can be put in place in order to meet the