

Oral Questions

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-POLLUTION POLICY IN ARCTIC

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has Canada been asked by the United States to modify its policy toward protection of the Arctic against pollution; and is the government considering changes to the law adopted in 1970 giving the Canadian government jurisdiction over pollution zones in the Arctic extending 100 miles from the Canadian coast?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think I can assure the hon. member that the answer to both parts of the question is no.

ARGENTIA, NEWFOUNDLAND—CANADIANS EMPLOYED BY UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DENIED RIGHT TO FORM UNION

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and concerns a number of Canadian civilians employed by the United States government on the U.S. naval station at Argentia, Newfoundland. In view of the fact that these people are receiving wages less than the prevailing rate in the area, and in view of the fact that they have been denied the right to organize themselves into a union and thereby receive the benefits of collective bargaining, would the minister undertake to make representations to his counterpart in the United States government with a view to having this inequity removed, so as to ensure that these Canadians are paid wages that are at least comparable to those paid people in the federal civil service who are doing the same work in that area?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his representation. I am not fully informed on the facts in question. I will attempt to inform myself, and if there is a basis for representations I will be happy to consider that course.

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TRANSPORT

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON STUDIES INTO FREIGHT RATES

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. On January 22 and again on January 24 the minister indicated that studies respecting discriminatory freight rates as they relate to the western provinces were almost ready. Would the minister tell the House how much longer we will have to wait before these studies are completed? Could I also ask the minister whether he will be making a statement on motions, and can he advise the House whether any corrective measures will be brought forth at that time to eliminate the discrepancies and anomalies to which these studies are directed?

[Mr. Ouellet.]

● (1500)

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member will recall that the commitment made by the railways was to the effect that they would supply the CTC and the Department of Transport with information concerning costs. That information was to be transmitted to the provinces which asked for cost disclosure and information on a confidential basis. This has been done and all the provinces have received much of the information for which they asked. They are studying it now. At the meeting we are going to hold in a few weeks, I think we will be discussing those items.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, having regard to the fact that the whole subject of policy formation and redress of such discriminatory freight rates seems to be in the hands of this so-called federal-provincial committee, will the minister undertake to take this House into his confidence and bring us up to date by giving us something in the form of a progress report or a statement on motions, so that we will be in a position to determine whether in fact any progress has been made or whether this committee is just being used as an excuse by the minister for failing to come up with an effective transportation policy?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should have more confidence in the provinces than he seems to have.

Mr. Mazankowski: I have confidence in the provinces.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): We have transmitted the information, as we promised. I hope that shortly we will be discussing this disclosure bill during a debate here in the House. If the hon. gentleman wants to discuss whether we should respect the confidentiality of that information, I will be open to suggestions at that time. For the time being, I think the commitment of the railways was to the effect that they would provide the provinces with the information. The provinces want to determine whether there really is discrimination, and they want to be in a position to use the information they receive in presenting their case to the CTC.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, having regard to the fact that the minister has seen the studies, and in view of the fact that there must obviously be some discrimination in respect of freight rates, is the minister going to bring forth a proposal to redress the discriminations and anomalies which are in existence?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I think that the groups or institutions which are in the best position to pass judgment on this are the provinces. They now have the information, and if they feel there is discrimination—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Of course they feel there is discrimination.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Everybody knows there is discrimination.