

Oral Questions

Energy Corporation, and will the federal financial commitment be sufficient to lower or stabilize electric energy costs in the maritimes?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology): I believe the corporation will do just that. I believe it will help stabilize electric energy costs and that it will provide more secure energy at lower cost than any alternative. As to the composition of the board of directors and whether DREE will be represented by a member of the board, that is a matter which is presently under discussion.

Mr. Howie: Can the minister tell the House when he plans to let the provinces know the cost-sharing formula with respect to Lepreau, Fundy and similar projects which the corporation might undertake?

Mr. Gillespie: Yes, indeed. At three o'clock I shall be tabling the memorandum of understanding reached between myself and the three maritime premiers. That memorandum sets forth the cost-sharing arrangements with respect to Lepreau.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

REFERENCE TO S.O. 43 MOTION PROPOSED EARLIER TODAY

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, I will direct my question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that several members of the government refused unanimous consent to my proposed motion under Standing Order 43—

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member should proceed to his question.

Mr. Corbett: Is this to be taken by the free nations of the world as meaning that the government condones such murder and crime?

Some hon. Members: Oh!

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MANPOWER

SHORT-TERM WORK PERMITS FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It arises from the fact that much of Canada's production equipment is foreign-built and that Canadian business often has to rely on quick advice or on-site repair by foreign nationals when it has to be repaired.

[Mr. Howie.]

Has the minister instructed his officials to issue short-term permits to these foreign nationals in such circumstances, so that the economy can be kept rolling?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): We deal with these cases on an individual basis. Sometimes we are criticized because we allow the entry of foreign nationals to operate a piece of equipment and subsequently they stay to work on the equipment and do jobs that Canadians could do.

However, when we are satisfied that the request concerns a piece of equipment covered, for example, by a patent which has to be kept secret, or in cases where there is no time to find a Canadian to work on the operation, then we issue a temporary permit and do everything we can to accommodate the business.

Mr. Epp: That is the precise problem, Mr. Speaker. By the time the department, through its officials, has investigated whether a short-term work permit should be granted, so much production time has been wasted that Canadian employees are in danger of being laid off.

Requests have been made by various companies that a different system be introduced under which, if requests are made to local Manpower officials, quick investigation can take place and foreign nationals can be brought in should they be needed. It makes no sense whatever to wait for the bureaucratic machinery to unwind while production equipment is idle.

Mr. Cullen: If the hon. member has specific cases in mind, we shall be happy to look at them. Nevertheless, we do have an obligation to see that Canadians are employed if there are Canadians available who can do the work required. We must be vigilant to see that such requests are not used as a dodge to secure the employment of non-Canadians, but we do our best to accommodate companies when the circumstances warrant it.

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AIR TRANSPORT

INVESTIGATION INTO VIOLATIONS OF AIR SAFETY REGULATIONS

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. On his own admission, Bill C-40 which he has introduced and relates to the transport accident investigation commission is not likely to be given too high a priority before the election, and even if it were given priority we would probably be looking at a lead time of about two years before an accident investigation branch could be set up.

This being the case, what does the government intend to do in the interim period, which could amount to as long as three or four years, possibly, to alleviate the concern of the Canadian flying public about violations of air safety which have occurred and which have been in the news recently?