

STATEMENTS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, I would like to get back to the replies from the—no, my friend, you are the showman of this House. We will wait for you to get up—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McGrath: You always speak from your seat.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member simply ask questions. This is the question period.

Mr. McGrath: I am entitled to do so without interruption. The Prime Minister in reply to the Leader of the Opposition indicated that there is some doubt as to the legality. In other words, he was not accepting the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. Then he went on to refer to the judgment of the Chief Justice of Manitoba when he talked about the situation being hypothetical. There is nothing hypothetical about the closure motion before this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: And there is nothing hypothetical about the—

Madam Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member for New Westminster-Coquitlam.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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• (1450)

FISHERIES

REGULATIONS FOR 1981 SALMON FISHING SEASON ON WEST COAST—FRASER RIVER FISHERY

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct a very urgent question to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It follows the question yesterday of my colleague. Since the discussions yesterday between the Fraser River fishermen and the minister's Pacific coast officials apparently did not lead to any modification of the government's proposal respecting the closing of the 29 D section of the Fraser, will the minister now instruct his officials at their further meeting the day after tomorrow, Friday, to return to what was offered last December by the Pacific Salmon Commission, particularly leaving the Fraser open between the Pattullo Bridge and Mission Bridge and allowing a one day a week minimum fishery for the gill-netters?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member, who is interested in my giving her reliable information, will forgive me if I tell her that I have not been briefed on the meeting which took place yesterday. I hope this will be done later this afternoon.

Oral Questions

Obviously, I will be glad to give her by telephone an immediate answer and in the House tomorrow, if she so wishes.

Miss Jewett: Madam Speaker, I particularly wish the minister would attend to the request about going back to what the Pacific Salmon Commission offered.

INVITATION TO MINISTER TO ATTEND MEETING

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, may I further ask the minister why he has not replied to the invitation sent to him by the Fraser River fishermen to attend their meeting this Sunday afternoon? It will be a very large meeting held in New Westminster. Why has the minister not had the courtesy to reply, and is he in fact going to attend that major meeting they are so anxious to have him attend?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, it is very much because we are trying to find a solution that the meeting took place yesterday, and I hope that on both sides there was some element of flexibility which might find accommodation. In the case of the sport fishery, I think we are on the road to finding accommodation between conflicting views.

As for attending the meeting, I must say that we are somewhat paralysed in Ottawa these days. I have had travel plans which have been—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. LeBlanc: Hon. members opposite are the reason for the paralysis.

I must confess that I have not found this type of issue is resolvable at mass public meetings where speech-making, and not discussion, is the order of the day.

Madam Speaker: Would the hon. member for St. John's East now like to ask his supplementary question? I would hate to frustrate his right to ask questions, but I did want to indicate, in the only way a Speaker can, that it is important for the Speaker to maintain decorum and to maintain a balance between the different parties in the House of Commons who like to ask questions during the question period. This was the only way I had finally to bring the hon. member to realize this. If he would like to ask a supplementary question now, I will give him the floor.

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THE CONSTITUTION

STATEMENTS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, frustration is something we on this side of the House are learning to live with. It took the Prime Minister almost five minutes—four minutes 57 seconds—to reply to the Leader of the Opposition. I was given less than a minute.

Oral Questions

How can the Prime Minister argue his case on the fact that the resolution now before the House is hypothetical when in fact the government refused in committee to accept any amendments on the process or any amendments on the amending formula? The government has placed a closure motion before this House to get the resolution through as it is—

An hon. Member: With the support of Ed Broadbent.

Mr. McGrath:—with the passive support of the Leader of the NDP, who has gone into some kind of metamorphosis and turned into a powder-puff.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for St. John's East should ask his question right now. I plead with him to conform with what I am asking him to do.

Mr. McGrath: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I find it very difficult to restrain myself. The unanimous judgment of the Appeal Court of Newfoundland, as opposed to the statement of one judge in Manitoba, had this to say—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. McGrath: The Prime Minister was allowed to quote.

The division of powers prescribed by the Constitution excludes federal jurisdiction over provincial autonomy within their legislative competence, and thus a proper request to Her Majesty's Parliament in Great Britain to change such fundamental aspects of the Constitution can only be made after the provinces have agreed to such change.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Does the hon. member really think I can allow him to continue with such a preamble? I just have to cut him off and not allow him now to ask his question. I have to recognize members of the NDP because they must have the time allotted to them.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops-Shuswap.

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ENERGY CONSERVATION**ABUSE OF CANADIAN HOME INSULATION PROGRAM**

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, my question is not about the Constitution. It is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It deals with CHIP. I would be surprised if there is not a member of this House who has not been approached by his or her constituents about CHIP and the fact that it is being seriously abused by a number of unscrupulous companies operating across Canada which are defrauding not only the Government of Canada but also individual citizens, as well as the Canadian taxpayer indirectly.

What steps is the minister taking to bring to a close these fraudulent methods and techniques presently being employed from one end of Canada to another?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I must tell the hon. member that this indeed is a question about which I have had great concern over the last year. The overwhelming majority of contractors in this field are doing an honest job and a fair job for the citizens of this country and for the government of this country. Unfortunately, it appears there have been individuals who have abused the system, and in every instance where this has been reported there have been investigations. If necessary, prosecutions will be undertaken.

However, with respect to the general question raised by the hon. member, we have nonetheless decided to introduce a certification system for the contractors in this field. This certification system will ensure that the people who work in this field are properly qualified and meet the standards required. Already a high percentage of contractors have agreed and have received this certification. All the others will have to comply with this requirement by sometime next fall. This is in progress. We are monitoring the situation very carefully because it is a source of concern, and I thank my hon. friend for having brought this matter to the attention of the House.

INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the steps being indicated by the minister. However, unfortunately this plan will not come into effect until well into the summer and perhaps into the fall. In the meantime these fraudulent activities continue.

Would the minister look into improving the inspection system by taking advantage of the existing municipal infrastructure, or perhaps even by inviting community organizations to participate in this program in the place of many small businesses so that the labour is local labour, so that abuse is minimized, and so that funds stay in communities? My concern is that this is putting a black mark on many small businesses across Canada, and essentially on the small business community.

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, if you will permit me to answer, the program which was described by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is undertaken in co-operation with the Canadian General Standards Board, which reports to me. We have signed a contract with the Royal Canadian Legion in order to accomplish exactly what the hon. member had identified. The Royal Canadian Legion will be involved in the process of the verification and certification of individual contractors at the local level.