

## THE ADMINISTRATION

### STATEMENT EXPLAINING RESIGNATION FROM CABINET

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin-St. George's):** Madam Speaker, I rise to make a personal statement. I understand there have been consultations—

**Mr. Nielsen:** I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I heard the introductory words of the Hon. Member which were that he was rising to make a statement. If it is not a question of privilege on which he is rising, I would suggest the Chair has an obligation to seek the unanimous consent of the House prior to the making of such a statement.

**Madam Speaker:** I thought the Hon. Member was going to refer to the unanimous consent. I was just waiting for him to terminate his sentence. However, the Hon. Member knows, and I believe he has spoken to some of his colleagues, that he must ask for the unanimous consent of the House.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pinard:** Yes, Madam Speaker. Earlier this morning I spoke to the Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) and to the Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), and asked them to give unanimous consent or find out whether it could be obtained, to allow the Hon. Member to make a personal statement. Their reaction was positive, provided that if the Member for Yukon concluded that the statement required a reply, he would be free to act accordingly. We do not think the statement will be political. We think it will be very short, and that it will be a statement of facts, and in the circumstances, he gave me to understand he would have no objection to a personal statement that was not a question of privilege, provided he would have a chance to reply if he found it necessary.

[English]

**Mr. Nielsen:** Madam Speaker, the Government House Leader is quite correct in pointing out that he did consult with me with respect to the intentions of the Hon. Member in seeking to make a statement. The Government House Leader is also quite correct that I assured him that the Members of the Official Opposition would provide that consent since it was my view, considering the likely nature of the statement which is going to be made, that it affects that Hon. Member's personal privileges as a Member of the House, and on the basis that it is in substance a question of privilege, we do give that consent.

**Mr. Deans:** Madam Speaker, my views were also sought, and on behalf of my colleagues I indicated that we would likewise give consent.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Statement—Mr. Simmons

**Mr. Simmons:** Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) for his observations. When he interjected, I was about to say I was rising to make a personal statement rather than a statement on privilege because, in my view, it is a larger issue. However, the House can decide that when it has heard me. I was about to say, also, that I understand there have been consultations, as has since been confirmed, and if I do have unanimous consent I would like to proceed with my statement.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the Hon. Member have the unanimous consent of the House?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Simmons:** Madam Speaker, let me come, then, immediately to the point of my remarks. In so doing let me welcome the new Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) and thank him and his caucus, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) and his caucus, my good friend the Hon. Member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko), and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and our caucus, for affording me an opportunity to address an issue which will be of some interest to the House.

I propose to take the next few minutes of the time of the House to provide as full an explanation as possible of the circumstances surrounding my resignation from Cabinet on August 22.

In my letter of resignation I cited personal reasons for my decision. Subsequently, I stated publicly that, since my reasons were private, and without any public dimension at that time, I had elected to exercise a right which I believe is the unfettered right of every person in this country, whether a public office holder or not, and that is the right to discuss one's private matters with others, including the press, or not to do so.

If I may say so with reference to the press, just in passing, I believe the press has handled this issue with the persistence and, with two very glaring exceptions, with the responsibility which has always been its trademark.

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I had good reason, Madam Speaker, for exercising that right as you will shortly see. I can tell you now that the private reasons for my resignation relate to a tax matter. I became aware subsequent to my appointment to Cabinet that a recommendation from the Department of National Revenue that a charge be preferred against me in relation to certain unreported income had not been dealt with by the Department of Justice. I shall return in a little while to the background of that recommendation. First let me deal with the matter solely in the context of my appointment to, and my resignation from, Cabinet.

On the evening prior to the day of my being sworn in as Minister of State for Mines I had an indication that an invitation to join Cabinet may be forthcoming from the Prime Minister. On the strength of that indication I proceeded to reflect on the implications of Cabinet membership on my