

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, it is a very important question and I wanted to lay the proper groundwork. Would the minister advise the House whether these suggestions have been accepted by the Canadian government and, if not, why not?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in response to the question directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, may I say that the International Joint Commission is meeting this week and reviewing progress in respect of cleaning up the Great Lakes. In reply to the second question about the control of water levels, this is under active review in my department and also in the relevant departments in the United States.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I have one last supplementary with respect to the answer to the last question. Can the minister give the House any indication when he will be able to advise the House that a conclusion has been reached in this regard?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, as soon as we receive a recommendation from the International Joint Commission in the latter respect.

* * *

[Translation]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ENFORCEMENT OF AGREEMENT WITH UNITED STATES RESPECTING QUEBEC LUMBERMEN WORKING IN MAINE

Mr. John Harney (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

In view of the fact that more than 1,500 lumbermen of the southwestern region of the province of Quebec cross the boundary each year to work in the state of Maine, where they are often poorly accommodated and fed and have no health insurance nor workmen's compensation of any kind, can the minister assure the House that the letters of intent signed in 1942 and 1958 by Canada and the United States are still—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I invite the hon. member for Scarborough West as well as all other hon. members, as I have done a moment ago, to try to put their questions more succinctly. In my opinion, a question as long as this one normally calls for a long answer, and that would be an injustice towards other members who wish to ask questions.

Mr. Harney: I complete my question, Mr. Speaker.

Are these letters still in effect, and if so, what measures are taken to ensure their enforcement?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I shall have to ascertain whether these letters are still in effect and I will inform the hon. gentleman.

Oral Questions

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

EDMONTON—REASON FOR REPORTED PURCHASE BY GOVERNMENT OF HOLY REDEEMER COLLEGE

Mr. Dan Hollands (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. In view of the fact the government has reportedly purchased the Holy Redeemer College which lies on the southern outskirts of the city of Edmonton, would the minister tell the House what the government intends to do with this institution?

Mr. Speaker: I suggest to the hon. member that this question should be on the order paper or considered at the time of adjournment.

Mr. Hollands: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Pembina rises on a point of order.

Mr. Hollands: Mr. Speaker, my question is related to a matter of urgent necessity. The people in the area have written to me and to the minister's department. I sent the minister notice of the question this morning and I am sure he would want to answer it.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the minister would not mind replying at the time of adjournment. This is a decision that the Chair makes. This is why the rules provide that if a question is urgent it can be considered in priority at the time of adjournment on the very same day.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

POSSIBILITY OF REDUCTION IN STRENGTH OF ARMED FORCES—PRESENT NUMBER

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. Would the minister advise the House whether consideration has been given to lowering the troop strength ceiling of the Canadian forces to 79,000 and whether a decision has been taken? Can he also tell the House what the actual strength of the forces was during the past few weeks?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the present strength is over 81,000. No consideration is being given currently to going down to 79,000.

● (1440)

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Would the minister advise whether there is applicable generally throughout the forces a six month's deferment of all requests for release by any or all ranks?

Mr. Richardson: No, Mr. Speaker, that is not general.