

Minister call a special meeting of the NATO Foreign Ministers?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I, and I am sure all Hon. Members of the House, share the view of the hon. spokesman for the Liberal Party the importance of Mr. Gorbachev's most recent proposal and, indeed, the importance of the process. I intend to be making a statement in the House later this week with regard to arms control matters generally. I will naturally ensure that the Hon. Member and the Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam receive copies of that statement in time to permit them to reply on behalf of their Parties.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER PRIME MINISTER COMMUNICATED WITH UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, since the Minister has indicated that he intends to make a statement in the House on this very important subject, I would like to ask him whether he has been in touch with the President of the United States to inform him of Canada's interest in having this new proposal examined as soon as possible and perhaps also to ask him whether it would be convenient to have a meeting of the External Affairs Ministers concerned as soon as possible.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing dialogue between the Canadian Government and the Government of the United States, and also between the Canadian Government and the Soviet Union, more specifically regarding the proposals made by Mr. Gorbachev.

I think that for the time being, it will not be necessary to have an emergency meeting of External Affairs Ministers of NATO or other countries, but should anything happen to make such a meeting necessary, the Canadian Government will always be ready to propose such a meeting.

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[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

LOGGING PRACTICES ON LYELL ISLAND, B.C.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. I think all Hon. Members of the House know how complicated is the issue of logging on South Moresby. The Minister is aware that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans suggested that charges be laid against Western Forest Products and Frank Beban Logging some time ago for their logging practices on Lyell Island. It has been before the Department of Justice for some time. Could the Minister advise the House today, in light of the resumption of logging on Lyell Island, whether or not a decision has now been made by the Government of Canada on whether to

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prosecute those two forest companies for their logging practices in the South Moresby area?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, that is not a question for the Government of Canada to decide. It is a question for the Attorney General of Canada to decide in his capacity as Attorney General.

Mr. Deans: Did you ask him?

Mr. Crosbie: It is not the custom to discuss in public whether or not charges may or may not be laid in any particular situation. If charges are laid, I will be glad to confirm them at the time.

PROSECUTION RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, in light of the controversy which has surrounded the particular logging practices on Lyell Island and the fact that these particular charges relate to logging which occurred over four years ago, and the fact that a logging stream—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is becoming a preamble. May I just have a question, please?

Mr. Fulton: What advice has the Minister been given by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans! It is my understanding that it has recommended prosecution. I wonder whether the Department of Justice has agreed with that view.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, that is a repetition of the first question. It is not the practice—and certainly it would not be a good practice—for there to be discussion in the House about whether charges should or should not be laid against anybody in any particular situation. If charges are laid, then the effect will become known.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

CANADA-UNITED STATES AGREEMENTS

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Last December the Minister gave us a commitment in the House that he would keep the members of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence fully informed about the Canada-United States defence agreements. Over the weekend we have learned that other agreements have come up about which he has not told us. I have a list of the titles in my hand. Did the Minister know about the existence of these agreements prior to this weekend? If he did, why were they withheld from parliamentarians after his commitment in December to keep the standing parliamentary committee fully informed?