

Oral Questions

unreasonable delay with respect to arriving at a conclusion.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the decision has not been made. The reason for this is that we are making a thorough investigation of the allegations, and there have been officials of the Department of Justice visiting their counterparts in Toronto and examining all the evidence.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**PROGRESS OF INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED BRIBERY OF FEDERAL OFFICIALS BY SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I think perhaps we might as well find out what is happening in connection with the RCMP probe with regard to the allegations of bribery vis-à-vis federal officials. I wonder if the Minister of Justice or the Solicitor General can bring us up to date in this regard. Have there been any interim reports? Is there anything to disclose at this particular time, or just what has been done in this regard?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member speaks of allegations of bribery, I have heard none in this House, and in so far as what I know of what the press reported, there were reports of moneys being given for electoral purposes, but I am not aware of any allegations of bribery. Perhaps the hon. member could refresh my mind.

Mr. Alexander: I do not think that the Prime Minister was really awake for that particular question, and I say that with all due respect. I directed my question to the Solicitor General as a result of the request made by the Minister of Labour. He indicated that the RCMP was investigating alleged bribes of federal officials. I am asking the Solicitor General if he will answer that question which was posed earlier.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I checked with the RCMP last week, and they told me that the investigation is still under way. I will check with them again tomorrow.

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[Translation]

HOUSING**GUARANTEE PROGRAM FOR BUYERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

Last Monday, the minister stated in Winnipeg, and I quote:

... the federal government has promised to set up a national guarantee program for home buyers, which will probably be applied by an agency within which the industry will not be the majority.

[Mr. Alexander.]

The industry would have a 49 per cent participation in this agency, and the majority would be headed by representatives of the government and consumers.

The minister added later on that such an agency could be set up almost instantly. Could the minister tell which object his department and the government want to attain with such a program?

[English]

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have never really believed that anything that is good happens around here instantaneously, but we are certainly prepared to work with the housing industry along with the provinces, the consumers and the lending institutions to arrive at a proper formula for warranty system. We are making very good progress. I had discussions with the industry in Winnipeg and subsequent discussions on it. I am hopeful that very soon we will offer a warranty plan which will be acceptable and will be welcomed by all provinces and all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Beaudoin: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

Can the minister say whether the purpose of this program would be parallel to that of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation?

[English]

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, there is no parallel program. We are not trying to set up parallel powers here in any sense whatsoever. It is a new program to protect home buyers against defects in housing, both major and some not so major, so that they have the assurance that they are getting a good product, as they will under our housing program.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL NOT OPPOSE PROVINCES IN FREIGHT RATE APPEAL CASE**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. It has to do with the judgment or order handed down yesterday by the Canadian Transport Commission in connection with freight rates. Under that order the decision is that there be a hold back against the railway companies. I ask the minister whether, if the order is appealed—as apparently it will be having regard to the statement made by the counsel for the Canadian Pacific Railway—the counsel for the minister and the government of Canada will again follow the unprecedented action that it took on January 9 in the federal court in opposing the positions taken, and in direct conflict with those positions and decisions of the provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba supported by the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and the Atlantic Transportation Commission? Could the minister give the assurance that there will be no monkey business of the kind that took place when the government of Canada stood against the shippers of Canada? Indeed, it was so blatant that Mr. Gordon Blair, a former Liberal member of parliament, said—