

Oral Questions

Mr. Charles E. Haliburton (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Fisheries or the Secretary of State for External Affairs be kind enough to tell us whether in fact there is in existence at the moment an international agreement with regard to the haddock fishery?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, there is the undertaking which was entered into at the last ICNAF conference involving all 16 nations that fish in the North Atlantic.

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PENSIONS**RAILWAY EMPLOYEES—INQUIRY AS TO APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER TO CONDUCT INQUIRY**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Labour. In view of the minister's commitment made in the House last August and confirmed last month in Edmonton that he would appoint a commissioner to go into all aspects of railway pensions, including the position of those already retired from all railway lines in Canada, can he say when that commissioner will be appointed?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I do not recall my precise wording. I do recall having stated to the parties themselves that we had under serious consideration the appointment of a commissioner if this type of arrangement could not be arrived at satisfactorily by the parties themselves. I would advise the hon. member, who I know has a great interest in the matter, that we would be prepared to give serious consideration to such action but we are canvassing the matter with the parties to see whether this could not be accomplished in this way.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Will the minister endeavour to bring this matter to a conclusion and make a statement to the House on it within a few days?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): I have some information that I am checking now. I do not want to deal with the matter in the House at this time because I am not that sure of the accuracy of the information, but I think there may be significant moves afoot right now in this direction. I should like to check it out and I will advise the hon. member.

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[Translation]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**INJURING OF VERDUN MIDGET HOCKEY PLAYERS IN MOSCOW BY SOVIET TEAM—REQUEST FOR REPRESENTATIONS**

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

In view of the bloody incident which took place this weekend at the Saholniki Park Arena in Moscow, when 14 and 15 year-old hockey players from Verdun, in the prov-

[Mr. Davis.]

ince of Quebec, were brutally assaulted and seriously wounded by some Soviet "Midgets" during a fight without equal in the history of hockey, does the minister intend to send a protest to the embassy of the U.S.S.R. and demand compensation for these acts of barbarism?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would hesitate to give that undertaking, but I will certainly look into the circumstances. I am sure the Soviet government itself had hoped that these games would promote international good will.

[Translation]

Mr. Wagner: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is it the intention of the minister to request a complete report on this incident from the Canadian embassy in Moscow, and would he assure the House that it will be made public as soon as it is received?

[English]

Mr. Sharp: Certainly there will be inquiries. I could not undertake to make the report public, but I hope I will be able to give an explanation if one is provided to me.

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FINANCE**REQUEST THAT MINISTER SUGGEST TO BANKS THAT THEY REDUCE INTEREST RATES TO LOWER COST OF BORROWING**

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In view of the minister's frequent statements regarding the close inter-relationship between interest rates in Canada and those in the United States, has he been in touch with the Canadian chartered banks recently to suggest to them strongly that they follow the example of American chartered banks, which have made several reductions in their prime rates in the past few weeks, as a means of lowering the cost of borrowing to Canadians and helping to bring the Canadian dollar back to par with the U.S. dollar?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, one of the main factors in the differential between short term rates in the United States and Canada at the moment is the difference between the economic cycles in the United States and Canada. We are in a stronger cycle than is the United States. I am watching the movement of interest rates, as is the governor of the Bank of Canada, with a view to the movement of the exchange rate on the one hand and the increasing money supply on the other.

Mr. Hees: Would the minister and his colleagues please get on their bicycles and pedal a hell of a lot faster than they have been doing recently?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is a representation.