

Oral Questions

connected with questions. It seems to me that the questions asked have been to the point, as have been the answers. The situation is being clarified as the questions and answers come forward. It seems to me that this is good parliamentary exercise, but I cannot recognize in it the ingredients of a question of privilege respecting the rights, conduct or the ability of a member to function as a member of the House of Commons. When the Solicitor General rose on his question of privilege, there were about 12 minutes remaining in the question period, and I was about to recognize the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a further question of privilege. When the Leader of the Opposition responded to my remarks, he said something which I feel raises another question of privilege and which I should answer. He said he felt that I, as Solicitor General, was involved in a conflict of interest in the carrying out of my duties as I was in charge of the investigation being carried on by the RCMP. That is completely false, as anyone familiar with the RCMP act and the traditions of parliament will know. The RCMP carry on these investigations themselves. If they see fit to lay charges and prosecute, they can do so without consulting me in any way. They direct their own investigations. I do not direct their investigations.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I simply assert, in response to what the Solicitor General said, that in a situation like this the Solicitor General, in my judgment, ought not to be in charge of this investigation and reporting to the government in that regard.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL
UNION—REQUEST FOR PUBLICATION OF TERMS OF
REFERENCE AND FINDINGS OF INQUIRY

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. As the Solicitor General is ultimately in charge of the inquiry, both from the point of view of the terms of reference of the inquiry and of his acting upon the findings of the RCMP, will the minister inform the House if he will make public the terms of reference of this inquiry and the findings?

Mr. Fairweather: And the result.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, in reply to that assertion, may I say that I am not in charge of the disposition of the findings. The police, if they find evidence on which to lay charges, will see what charges are to be laid. They do not need my permission to lay charges, and it would be wrong if they did, because that might involve a conflict of interest. The hon. member, in the second part of his question, asked if I would make the report, which the RCMP would give me, available to the House. The RCMP do not usually report to me on investigations. They conduct an investigation and, if there is evidence on which to lay charges, they lay charges; if there is no evidence, they will not do so. When I ask them for a report, they usually give it to me, but it is against all tradition to table police reports in the House of Commons.

[Mr. Speaker.]

● (1500)

Mr. Symes: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the same minister. In view of the fact the RCMP gave the minister an interim report on the investigation and in view of the fact federal cabinet ministers are involved, I should think the minister would want a report from the RCMP on this. Again may I ask the minister whether he will make the conclusions of that report public so that any suspicion of this House and the country can be allayed that proper investigation is not being carried out?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I will give serious consideration to making the conclusions of the report available to the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: Deo gratias! Mr. Speaker, I do not remember what I wanted to ask.

As for the question of privilege raised a while ago, I note that there are some doubts in various quarters. If there is nothing to hide, Mr. Speaker, an inquiry should be launched in all honesty to satisfy public opinion and to prove to the Canadian people that Parliament can work quickly to pass legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my colleagues on both sides of the House who are hurling charges at one another that I feel that innocents are not more numerous on one side than on the other. There are just as many on both. They are both financed by the same sources. If those members came more often in Quebec, they would be aware that we are used to inquiry commissions. We even have a premier who is—

An hon. Member: Mind what you will say!

Mr. Fortin: Oh yes! That has become the main industry in Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

The premier of Quebec who is now in France has spent \$500 million of the money collected from taxpayers to buy his welcome there. Nobody says anything. At the House of Commons, Tories and Whigs have the same source of funding, throw accusations at one another, refuse to make investigations while I wait to ask my question.

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FINANCE

EXCISE TAX ON HEAVY VEHICLES IN WAREHOUSE

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. After all, Mr. Speaker, he is the one who administers the governments financed by campaign funds, so he will understand what I mean.

The Minister of Finance recently tabled a budget that could have very serious consequences for some citizens. Not long ago, I asked him a question about boat manufacturers. I should like to put the same question to him today, with regard to vehicles of more than 16,000 pounds, that are stored in yards and to which the sales tax removal cannot be applied.