

Mr. Lalonde: Contrary to what the hon. member is insinuating, I discussed the matter on various occasions with those in charge of the Amateur Hockey Association.

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[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

ALLEGED LIMITATION ON RIGHT OF CANADIAN CONSUMER COUNCIL TO INFORM PUBLIC—REASON FOR FAILURE TO RE-APPOINT MR. BUCHWALD

Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and of course in the absence of the Prime Minister, I would like to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. Could he say why the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, when he finally revived the Canadian Consumer Council, limited its right to tell the Canadian public what it found, and will the Acting Prime Minister say whether it was disagreement about this secrecy or about some other matter which led the government not to invite the former chairman, Mr. Harold Buchwald, to accept re-appointment?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre De Bané (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member's information, his premises are altogether wrong. The council just appointed will have a more important budget than the preceding one. I would be able to make public all its researches and all its members will be able to make all the public statements they want, except to divulge the council's proceedings.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East rises on a point of order. I will see the hon. member for Rocky Mountain on a supplementary following that.

Mr. McGrath: Since this House met last Thursday for the question period, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs issued a major statement outside the House. I think the record should note the fact that, having made that statement, the minister was not prepared to come to the House today and answer questions from members.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will see the hon. member for Rocky Mountain on a supplementary, to be followed by the right hon. member for Prince Albert.

[Later:]

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my supplementary question to the parliamentary secretary who questions my premise. I ask him if it is the policy of the government that the new Consumer Council will have the right, as a council, to make public its findings, and will he also advise, in answer to my original question, whether it was disagreement about this matter of secrecy or disagreement about some other matter that caused the government not to invite the former chairman to accept re-appointment?

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that all members of that council will be able to express

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their views in public on departmental programs and policies, as well as on other matters of concern to consumers, provided reference is not made to confidential documents of the department. They will be able to make any declaration and publish any research they will be doing as members of the council.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): I am sure the parliamentary secretary acted inadvertently when he answered a question which I did not ask. I did not ask what they should do in their individual capacity as council members but in their capacity as members of the council as a whole.

[Translation]

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister is going to meet the members of this new council within a few days, in early May. I want to assure him that they will have full discretion to co-operate and express their opinions on all matters likely to interest consumers and that they will enjoy every freedom except of course to refer to the department's confidential documents.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ALLEGED REFUSAL OF PERMISSION TO VISIT CANADIAN CONTINGENT OF UNITED NATIONS MIDDLE EAST PEACEKEEPING FORCE

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It has to do with our Canadian force in the Middle East. I should like to ask him, to begin with, whether or not any agreements or arrangements have been entered into with the United Nations or with the commander of that force so that he is in a way subject to the views or ideas of the government of Canada, supplying, as this country does, so large a share of the force in that area.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Canada is participating in the UNEF on the request of the Secretary General. Of course, while our troops are there, they are under the command of the United Nations commander. However, as the hon. gentleman knows, they are not doing patrolling or any of this kind of work; they are doing the much more difficult and demanding work of providing the logistics component as they did in the previous force.

● (1500)

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the reason I asked the question was that I was informed this morning that the commanding officer will not permit a visit to Canadian troops there, even by the Minister of National Defence. I would ask the Acting Prime Minister to protest this because in the past, Privy Councillors have been permitted to visit Canadian troops in the United Nations forces.