

Oral Questions

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I think I can only repeat what I said a moment or so ago. There will be no wholesale or rampant rush to achieve what the Hon. Member is so afraid of. Let me reassure the Hon. Member that that is not going to happen.

* * *

THE ADMINISTRATION**OERLIKON LAND TRANSACTION—RCMP INQUIRY**

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. Can he confirm the information that we received from court officials in St. Jean-sur-Richelieu yesterday, namely, that as of yesterday afternoon no such warrants have been executed in the Saint Jean area in connection with the RCMP's investigation of the Oerlikon affair? Will the Minister explain why after two weeks the RCMP does not seem to have taken the basic step in a police investigation? Is this delay what the Prime Minister meant when he said on January 19 that the RCMP investigation would be carried out "immediately and urgently"?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the Hon. Member is inviting me to interfere with the RCMP investigation or not. I cannot confirm or deny that particular statement. That is a matter strictly within the hands of the RCMP, and the Hon. Member should know that.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF TWO-WEEK DELAY

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the Deputy Prime Minister stems from the fact that a two-week delay is ample time for people to destroy documents which could jeopardize their reputation. Since it is unthinkable that the RCMP should wait two weeks before starting its investigation, if it is planning to act with the swiftness promised by the Prime Minister, does this delay exist because the RCMP is reluctant to get involved in a primarily political matter, or is it because the Government has given explicit instructions to slow down the investigation?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member has some complaint about the way in which the RCMP is discharging its duties and responsibilities, let him make the complaint directly to the RCMP.

Mr. Cassidy: I am making it to you.

• (1140)

FISHERIES**RIGHTS OF FRANCE IN CANADIAN WATERS**

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Much has been misreported about the nature of France's fishing rights in Atlantic Canadian waters. Can the Minister tell the House the legal basis for France's fishing effort, and when those rights accrued?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is that the legal rights for France's fishing effort in Canadian waters flow from history—A treaty which a previous Liberal Government signed with France in 1972; a long-term agreement entered into by a previous Liberal Government with the European Community, including France, in 1982, and an exchange of diplomatic notes entered into by the previous Liberal Government which turned a blind eye to blatant French overfishing in the disputed zone south of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

In 1987 French cod quotas in Canadian waters are to be reduced to half of what they were last year, making a total reduction of 14,000 tonnes, because this Government refuses to continue those kinds of special arrangements which Liberal Governments propagated over the years.

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL SEA PRODUCTS

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, the president of National Sea Products has indicated that this arrangement is somehow of special benefit to the Province of Quebec and was designed to garner votes for this Government in that province. Can the Minister outline to the House his opinion of this allegation?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I think that type of allegation is scurrilous and regrettable, and that the president of National Sea Products should pay attention to operating his company.

I repeat the commitment I made in this House during the debate on Wednesday evening on the matter of what the price should be to resolve, once and for all, this important boundary dispute. As reported at page 2811 of *Hansard*, I said the following:

Our commitment to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is that any price which is too high for Newfoundland and Labrador is too high for Canada.

It is high time that all these armchair experts came up with alternative recommendations as Mr. Jeffrey Simpson has suggested this morning, rather than carping and criticizing.