

Inquiries of the Ministry

was done, how it was done and then report back to the house tomorrow?

Mr. Mackasey: I suggest that the hon. member would probably obtain a great deal more satisfaction if he discussed the matter with Dean Woods, whose responsibility it is to make certain that these valuable documents are not leaked or made available to the press prematurely.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that this report and other reports indicate that certain labour unions had access to the Woods task force report—and I speak specifically of the head of the steelworkers union—would the Minister of Labour inform the house how this leak came to pass?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, the gentleman who has just been alluded to is one of the more responsible labour leaders in this country. When the task force was set up by the previous prime minister, in his wisdom he placed at the disposal of the task force eight individuals, four from labour and four from management, to advise and help the task force to produce a respectable report. This gentleman to whom reference has just been made is, as I say, one of the top labour leaders of this country, and I am sure his advice would have considerable weight and be well appreciated by the task force.

Mr. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question was whether it was the prerogative of the gentleman about whom we are speaking to publicly divulge decisions taken by the task force, as obviously has been the case.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ABSENCE FROM HOUSE OF INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES MINISTERS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister concerning the whereabouts of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. When the minister brought in his estimates on Monday some of us were left with some concern. Yesterday I rose on a question of privilege relating to what he had said, and I have been following the roster and waiting with some anticipation for his appearance. He was scheduled to appear yesterday and again today. I wonder whether he will appear tomorrow.

[Mr. Hees.]

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is in Victoria, British Columbia, at a water policy seminar where he is replacing the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who is in hospital.

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister say whether he has received any word from the Minister of Fisheries as to whether he is coming back to the house today? I was in conversation with the minister and he told me he would contact the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Compton.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member kindly resume his seat? If the hon. member wants me to rule on this question I would have to rule that it is not usual to ask the Prime Minister where a minister is, or whether he will be in the house. I do not think that is a proper question. The question may be asked, but the hon. member cannot insist upon a reply.

Mr. Lundrigan: Then I should like to apologize, Mr. Speaker, for asking my question in that way. What I really meant to ask was whether the Prime Minister had received any indication from the Minister of Fisheries that he would return to the house, as he indicated to me he would during a telephone call a couple of minutes ago.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Later:]

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, might I ask the Prime Minister whether the Minister of Fisheries is actually prohibited from attending the house this afternoon, and whether the Prime Minister considers it more important for the Minister of Fisheries to be in his office rather than in the house explaining to the house, and accounting to the people of Canada through this house, a telegram on an urgent matter of public importance sent by the minister this morning?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. McGrath: Find your way out of that.

Mr. Trudeau: That won't be hard. The minister is not prohibited from attending