

Oral Questions

Hon. Member knows, we have maintained a peace force in Cyprus for almost 20 years. We will be asked once more by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to maintain a Canadian contingent of the United Nations Peace Force in Cyprus. We have done that in the expectation that at some point the parties will come together and resolve the problem so that our presence will no longer be necessary.

I must say at times I wonder how long we will have to remain in Cyprus in order to induce the contending parties to use the method of negotiation so that we can, at the appropriate time, withdraw our forces. I do not think it was ever intended that a peacekeeping force should remain in a situation for that length of time. I think that explanation is a pretty firm indication of the long-standing commitment that we have shown to Cyprus.

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AGRICULTURE

ILLEGAL IMPORTATION OF BUTTER FROM FRANCE

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Will the Minister indicate the results of his inquiry with the Canadian Dairy Council with respect to the illegally imported French butter which was used by the Department of External Affairs, at up to \$10 a pound? Does he agree with the External Affairs chef that French butter is better than the best of Canadian butter?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should not have had to ask the last part of his question. He knows there is no better butter than our butter, the butter that we have in Canada. It is utter nonsense to suggest that somebody else has better butter than we have.

The price was never \$10 per pound. The butter was brought into Canada illegally. It was brought to our attention in November or December of last year. We asked the RCMP to make an inquiry. We do not know how it came into Canada without a permit. Any butter that comes into Canada must come in under a permit under the Export and Import Permits Act, and be subject to our inspection.

This butter was not inspected by our people. We do not understand why anybody would want to bring it in. It was only used for a short time in the External Affairs restaurant, not in the cafeteria where the ordinary people are.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: They use Canadian butter. The chef in that cafeteria says it is the best butter in the world.

We know that the chefs who compete in international competitions that we sponsor world-wide, and who win world championships and gold medals, use Canadian butter in Europe and wherever else they compete.

Butter on sale in Ottawa this week is \$1.79 a pound.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[*Translation*]**VACANCY**

LANGELIER—HON. J. GILLES LAMONTAGNE BY RESIGNATION

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received a communication notifying me that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely, the Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne, Member for the electoral district of Langelier, by resignation. Accordingly, I have addressed my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a new writ of election for the said electoral district.

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[*English*]**PRIVILEGE**

MISS CARNEY—ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY REMARKS BY MR. LALONDE—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday the Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney) raised a point of order, complaining of an expression used by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) when answering a question in the House. I have carefully reviewed *Hansard* and I find that the Minister used the words "a very nice example of wilful distortion". However, I also find that the Hon. Member, when asking her question, said: "Why does the Minister blatantly misrepresent the facts"?

I find it difficult to make a distinction between "wilful distortion" and "blatant misrepresentation". If one is out of order, then I suggest the other is as well. It seems to me that the Hon. Member and the Minister have in the cut and thrust made something close to an equal trade. These kinds of exchanges have become a regular feature of our Question Period, regrettably in my opinion. Questions and answers become mini debates in which political accusations fly back and forth all the time. I would add that it would greatly assist the Chair if Hon. Members were to avoid the kinds of expressions to which I have referred.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, just so that I may understand your ruling, is it now the position of the Chair that the attribution of a wilful desire to mislead is no longer a breach of the privileges of the House?

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has made it quite clear, and I believe this has been a traditional position of the Chair, that the circumstances have to be taken into account. Unparliamentary terms are to be judged in the light of what they do to the House and what they do to the level and tone of debate. The Chair is simply pointing out that when a question begins with an accusation and, in the cut and thrust across both sides of the House, words are used, it is very difficult to draw the