

Oral Questions

Leader—that I have already initiated negotiations with the representatives of the two Opposition parties, since the appointment of the Information Commissioner requires a joint resolution of the House of Commons and the Senate. I know that my counterpart in the Senate is doing the same. We are now at the consultation stage. Obviously, sooner or later a joint resolution will have to be presented in the House. Up to now, a number of Members have indicated that they were not necessarily opposed to the proposals but would like to express certain views.

However, our parliamentary schedule is pretty full. We have some very urgent bills that must be adopted before we consider representations on any other motion, so that as soon as we have dealt with the urgent legislation, and if we get a consensus in both the Senate and the House of Commons, we shall then table the appropriate joint resolution regarding this important appointment.

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[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY

CASE OF FORMER RCMP CONSTABLE

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of security matters which have been before the House before, that I would like to get cleared up. My first question is for the Minister of Justice in his role as Attorney General. Since November 23 last, when it was publicly announced that the matter had been placed in his hands, the Minister of Justice has been pleading ignorance about the case of Long Knife, the pseudonym for the ex-RCMP corporal who recently admitted selling out a potential Canadian double agent to the Soviets for more than \$4,000. I do not know how much more bluntly, simply, or directly, I can put it to the Minister: Will James Morrison be charged or not?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, I have to tell the Hon. Member that I have still not received a report from my Department on this matter. Until such time as the matter is brought before me, I am not in a position to be able to make a decision.

Mr. Lawrence: That is almost unbelievable, but I guess not.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF GOUZENKO INQUIRY EXHIBITS

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Solicitor General. It is now over 18 months since the Gouzenko transcripts were released and we were told an internal departmental inquiry was underway which would report back to the House and to the Minister as to whether the actual exhibits and transcripts, the documentation of 30 years ago which Gouzenko took out of the Russian Embassy, should or should not be released. Will they be released, or will they not be released?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, as the Hon. Member indicated in his question, the transcripts have already been made public. The review process has turned its attention now to a collection of materials which are of great interest to the public that were generated by various Government Departments in the course of the hearings. These materials are contained, of course, right across the whole of the Government, not in one place. This inquiry, which I think is of great value and should be given priority, is underway now. As those documents are reviewed for the purpose of gathering them to make them public, the review will then turn its attention to the numerous exhibits to which the Hon. Member referred. It is a matter to which attention is being given.

• (1140)

If there were more resources available for allocations, it would go more quickly. But the job is being done, and it is being done seriously. I hope very shortly it will be possible to make public all the internal material generated within the Government in relation to the hearings, because there have been many requests for it.

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INDUSTRY

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State of External Affairs I will direct my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As the Minister knows, his Government is hosting a conference in Ottawa starting on Monday, called "Hi Tech 83", to promote increased participation by Canadian manufacturers in foreign, defence, and related high-tech areas. The Government has refused to release information requested by Members of Parliament and has restricted their access to this conference. Will the Minister tell the House why such secrecy is being used, and what the Government is hiding?

Miss MacDonald: It is the age of information.

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, in the absence of my colleague I will take notice of the question and I will try to get an answer back for the Hon. Member.

PROMOTION OF ARMS SALES

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Madam Speaker, I will direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Transport in his capacity as Acting Prime Minister. Since the Government has invited to this secret conference not only U.S. military officials and Canadian trade commissioners from sixty posts abroad,