

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will allow the hon. member a supplementary and will recognize the hon. member for York West and the Leader of the Opposition for the last questions and then call orders of the day.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister know of other departments that are following this practice of opening tenders in secret?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, I do not know of any such departments in the federal government. I am told that provincial governments follow that practice.

Some hon. Members: Explain!

Mr. Trudeau: I am very satisfied with the answer given by the Minister of Supply and Services who certainly did the right thing in looking into this matter as soon as he became minister. If I understand correctly, it is a practice that began or at least existed in the days of the Conservative government in this country.

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FILMS

AGREEMENT BY FAMOUS PLAYERS AND ODEON THEATRES ON SHOWING OF CANADIAN FEATURE FILMS

Mr. Jim Fleming (York West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Secretary of State. Can the minister confirm the various reports in recent days that an agreement has been made involving the famous Players and Odeon theatre chains to guarantee the showing of Canadian feature films for at least several weeks a year?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We will assume that the question has been asked directly. The hon. member cannot ask the minister to confirm a report. The minister might reply briefly as if the question had been asked directly.

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): Yes, Mr. Speaker. In line with the government's concern about getting wider distribution of Canadian films, an agreement has been arrived at. I am not in a position to outline the details because I still have to finalize some of them with the two chains.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

ALLEGED APPOINTMENT IN 1968 BY FORMER MINISTER, EDGAR BENSON, OF FIRM WITH WHICH HE HAD BEEN ASSOCIATED AS AUDITORS OF CMHC

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interrupting the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport but I should like to address a question to the Prime Minister. The right hon. gentleman will recall that a number of days ago I

[Mr. Goyer.]

directed a question to him in regard to a report that Mr. Edgar Benson, when he was the minister responsible for Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, had appointed an auditing firm with which he had formerly been associated, but of course is no longer associated, as the auditor for that corporation. I asked the Prime Minister whether the report was being investigated and whether this kind of appointment was consistent with the guidelines of his government in such instances?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I looked into the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition and found that, indeed, Mr. Benson, when he was the minister responsible for housing, had appointed a firm of auditors with which Mr. Benson had broken all associations many years before when he entered federal politics. I therefore see no conflict of interest involved in this question.

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SPORTS

MONTREAL OLYMPIC GAMES, 1976—GOVERNMENT POLICY REGARDING SUPPORT—ADVANCEMENT OF FUNDS TO CITY

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Unless there is a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might be permitted to answer a question put to me yesterday by the hon. member for Fraser Valley West regarding the Olympics. He asked me if any federal moneys or advances had been paid to COJO or to Montreal. I inquired from the Treasury Board and the President of the Treasury Board assures me that no such moneys have been paid.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Earlier this week discussions were concluded in Seattle between Canada and the United States relating to an agreement with respect to fisheries, without arrangements being made for further negotiations. If there are no further negotiations the agreement will expire on June 15. If it does, there will be chaos in the fishing industry on the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts.

My question of privilege is that I would have thought, inasmuch as those discussions ended this week and considering the great difficulties and apprehension involved, that the Secretary of State for External Affairs would take the opportunity to make a statement to the House on motions about this question so that the public and Canadian fishermen in particular could understand what their position is with respect to those negotiations and that agreement.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.