

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

SUGGESTED RE-INSTALEMENT OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice.

Since sordid crimes are increasing at an alarming rate in Canada, and I am thinking, for example, about the two policemen killed in an horrible way recently in New Brunswick, may I ask the minister whether he is considering the introduction of a bill reinstating capital punishment, or other measures aimed at the reduction of those crimes, in order to provide greater protection for Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): It is not my intention to introduce a bill. However, I would draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that capital punishment does in fact exist in Canada for that specific offence.

An hon. Member: How can you tell?

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

I am fully aware of the answer the minister has just given. But since that punishment has been reserved to particular cases, could he tell the House how many notorious criminals, who were fairly judged by the courts on well founded evidence, have been put to death since the experiment made by the government in recent years?

[English]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I think that question would either be for the Solicitor General or the order paper.

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TRADE

PROPOSED LEVY ON CANADIAN CEREALS BY EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO AVOID

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the new European Economic Community tariff system, which is due to come into effect on December 31 and will seriously hinder sales of Canadian cereals to member countries of the EEC, including Great Britain which, of course, is one of our most important cereals markets, would the minister advise the House what success, if any, the government is having in persuading officials of the EEC not to impose the proposed levy against Canadian cereals?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, although considerable progress has been made in negotiations with the EEC, we have not yet reached a satisfactory settlement. The concessions which have been offered by the EEC do not, in our view, fully compensate Canada; in our view there is still a substantial debt owing. The main outstanding question has to deal with a satisfactory accommodation on

[Mr. Speaker.]

wheat and barley as a result of the enlargement of the community by Britain and Denmark. We are also hoping to negotiate special arrangements with respect to aged cheddar cheese.

We do not agree with the community's claim that the concessions are adequate. The deadline is approaching, that is to say December 31, and we are seeking a special panel of GATT nations to examine the case for Canada. If we are not successful, and if we do not get an extension of that deadline, then we will be faced with withdrawing concessions ourselves from the EEC.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, may I put a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Did the Prime Minister receive any assurances from the officials of the EEC when he visited Brussels earlier this fall that the levy against cereals would not be applied against Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. Of course, they were arguing the contrary case. That is why, as the minister has said, we are before GATT now.

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COMMUNICATIONS

DATE OF PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE—MINISTER'S POSITION ON JURISDICTION OF FEDERAL AUTHORITY

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Communications. About a week ago Monday I was going to welcome him back from his European trek and African safari, and now I have been recognized I wish him a Merry Christmas. Following upon his journeys, may I ask the minister whether we are any closer to a communications conference, which many provinces would like to hold?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the discussions with the provincial departments of communications are still going on and we have yet to set the date of a further conference; but it seems that we are nearer to a consensus than the last time you recognized the hon. member, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Nowlan: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that at the present time there are four law suits in the various courts of Canada challenging the federal authority in communications, and in view of the interesting comment made by Premier Bourassa on the eve of his official visit to France that communications was the major delicate issue between the federal government and the provincial government and was non-negotiable, does the minister feel that there should be urgency to this question, or has he retracted and is no longer making the question of jurisdiction a condition precedent to the conference?

[Translation]

Mr. Pelletier (Hochelaga): Mr. Speaker, there has been no change in the policy concerning the discussion on constitutional jurisdiction. I still believe, and I repeat it to