

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

I find that the question period is not being applied to each and every member with the same fairness, and in support of that contention I would call your attention to the fact that a number of questions asked were of a similar nature to ones I have asked and answers to which the Chair has permitted. The last one was the question raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre yesterday, when he inquired about the welfare of workers at the Winnipeg air terminal, which question the Chair permitted while at the same time ruling out my questions of a similar nature concerning 400 workers in Cape Breton.

In further support of my contention that the rule is not applied fairly is the fact that the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Francis) has had occasion to rise and ask questions about road conditions in Ottawa.

Third, and this is the one which irks me most, the question period in the last few days has devoted much time to the interests of human rights, particularly the welfare of a convicted American dope peddler, whereas the questions I asked about the human rights of 400 workers in Cape Breton have been denied.

Answers have been provided to the house at the will of the ministers. This afternoon a question by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) was ruled out of order, but when the minister indicated he was willing to answer, then that question was permitted. This was indicated again quite clearly this afternoon on another question concerning the Eskimos. It was also ruled out of order but, because of the minister's willingness to provide an answer, it was permitted.

I fail to understand how questions involving 400 workers in Cape Breton can be continually ruled out of order, with no answers provided, particularly when questions of that nature are allowed in the interest of human rights concerning a convicted American dope peddler. Those same rights are denied to workers in Cape Breton.

**Mr. Speaker:** There are now a few minutes less in our question period; but in reply to the hon. member, if he is not satisfied with the conduct of the Chair there is a procedure open to him under the rules, and he may take that procedure. On the other hand it might be a very useful experiment to give the hon. member an opportunity of occupying the chair during some of the procedures of the house.

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Speaker, you maintain there is a procedure open to me. If I thought there was a hope of carrying it, I would put the appropriate motion.

[*Later:*]

**Hon. Léon Balcer (Three Rivers):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Justice as senior minister from the province of Quebec.

[*Translation:*]

Mr. Speaker, a little earlier the Prime Minister stated that discussions or negotiations between the province of Quebec and the federal government were being proceeded with, concerning the transfer of Eskimo affairs up north; but, on the other hand, according to Mr. Lévesque's statement these negotiations have broken off.

Could the Minister of Justice tell us who is the minister, deputy minister, official, or federal government representative who is continuing negotiations, as implied by the Prime Minister?

**Mr. Favreau:** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that, should I answer that question, I would do so as a member of the cabinet. Moreover, I feel that it should be directed to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Laing), since he is responsible for that matter at this time.

**Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm):** Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question?

So that the transfer of the administration of Eskimo affairs may be made to Mr. René Lévesque's satisfaction, can the minister tell the house if he will take charge of those negotiations to ensure that Mr. Lévesque's wishes and requirements are met, and take that responsibility away from the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources?

[*Text:*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

[*Later:*]

[*Translation:*]

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Following certain remarks made in connection with the manner in which discussions are conducted in this house, I must say, on behalf of our group, that we do not agree with the remarks made about the Chair a while ago and that we are satisfied with the manner in which the Chair is conducting the proceedings of this house.