

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Dorion: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the inference made by the hon. member for Drummond-Arthabaska (Mr. Boulanger) is completely unfounded. Before the press report came out, the investigation was supposed to have started and on four different occasions I had notified the chief electoral officer who—and I would like the hon. member for Drummond-Arthabaska to take a look at the act—is responsible for the administration of the act.

Mr. Pigeon: Good.

(Text):

FISHERIES**NON-ATTENDANCE OF MINISTER AT ANNUAL MEETING OF PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Erhart Regier (Burnaby-Coquitlam): My question, Mr. Speaker, is based on an editorial appearing in *The Fisherman* dated March 9 last. In view of the apparent inability of the Minister of Fisheries to attend even one annual convention of the united fishermen and allied workers union on the grounds that he has time to attend only annual meetings of national organizations, would the minister consult with the Prime Minister to see how that right hon. gentleman apparently finds time to open county fairs—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member's question departs very broadly from the accustomed type of question. It seems that he is intending to convey some argument or information to the house rather than get an answer to a question of fact.

Mr. Regier: If I might ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: If the minister feels he should comment on the assertion made by the hon. member, he may have the floor.

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out that, as all hon. members know, there are many meetings concerning fisheries carried on in every province of Canada, and when an organization of a provincial nature unfortunately has a meeting during the time in which parliament is in session I feel it is my duty to remain here in Ottawa rather than go to all these provincial annual meetings. I might say that in no other case has the executive of any organization experienced any difficulty in understanding the reasonableness of the view that the House of Commons is probably the most important organization in our democratic system, and that it requires our best attention.

[Mr. Boulanger.]

(Translation):

NORTHERN AFFAIRS**EDUCATION OF ESKIMOS IN NORTHERN QUEBEC**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Did the minister receive a formal request from the government of the province of Quebec that in the future the educational system for the Eskimo population in new Quebec, a territory which was integrated with the province of Quebec in 1912, 50 years ago this year, be placed under the jurisdiction of the government of the province of Quebec instead of that of the federal government?

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is no.

(Text):

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**CUBA—REPRESENTATIONS RESPECTING TRIALS OF PRISONERS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Has the government made any representations to the government of Cuba with respect to the trials of those who participated in the attack on Cuba about a year ago?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has been concerned over the fate of the prisoners held in Cuba, and that concern was expressed to the Cuban authorities through diplomatic channels in February. Furthermore, in view of press reports to the effect that the trials of these prisoners are to take place in Cuba later this week, I think on the 29th, instructions have been given by me that the matter be raised once again with the Cuban authorities in order to urge the Cuban government, on humanitarian grounds, that any trials of prisoners should be conducted in a fair and just manner.

There is, of course, a limit to the impact of representations made, because none of the prisoners were Canadians; but this appeal on the part of the Canadian government is made on the basis of what we believe should be the purpose of all governments, namely the maintenance of justice.