

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Some hon. Members: Order, order.

Mr. Regan: We will continue to provide those services at the moment when it is judged by the experts that it is appropriate and possible to make progress. We will leave no stone unturned in attempting to achieve a settlement.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEDIATOR

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications.

In light of the worsening conflict between a Crown corporation and the union of journalists, I wonder if the minister is prepared to appoint an independent mediator; in other words, someone who does not answer to the government, since it is directly involved?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, the hon. member put a question to which he already knows the answer. He is perfectly aware that it is up to the Minister of Labour to appoint a mediator in labour conflicts between Crown corporations and unionized employees working for those corporations. I must say, however, that it is a labour dispute over which I am deeply concerned, mainly because it is still continuing. It began more than three months ago and I have the impression that such long-lasting disputes can only worsen.

As I said before in the House, I have already met with the president of the union involved, and again late this afternoon I will have discussions with labour spokesmen and Department of Communications officials with a view to seeking grounds for agreement and understanding better the position of the union in this matter.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): At his meeting this afternoon, does the minister intend to suggest the name of an independent government mediator in the discussion, or will it be nothing more than an opportunity for the strikers to air their views before the minister?

Mr. Fox: Madam Speaker, the meeting has yet to take place, so I will see what kind of representations the union president and the CNTU president want to make. Still I can only repeat that the appointment of a mediator is a matter which falls exclusively under the jurisdiction of my colleague, the Minister of Labour.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF FORMER SPEAKER, HON. LUCIEN LAMOUREUX

Madam Speaker: I am sure hon. members will want to acknowledge the presence in our gallery of a former Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. Lamoureux.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[English]

COMBINES

INQUIRY WHETHER DEPARTMENT SANCTIONED VANCOUVER NEWSPAPER CONSOLIDATION

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General. It relates to the concentration of ownership in the Canadian newspaper industry, particularly the consolidation of ownership of the *The Province* and *The Sun* in the city of Vancouver. For the benefit of the House, will the minister confirm or deny that his department was advised in advance of the consolidation manoeuvre and at that time raised no objection and in effect approved the manoeuvres by these companies?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, common practice in the House has it that the minister cannot confirm or deny that the combines investigation director is involved in an investigation.

[English]

Mr. Skelly: Madam Speaker, that was clearly not in response to my question. It related to some suggestions that the minister and his department were advised in advance. I would suggest this statement really advocates a denial of truth by the publisher of *The Province* and Paddy Sherman, the vice president of Southam, that in fact the consultation took place and that by refusing to comment upon it they in fact gave approval in advance.

Would the minister be prepared to explain the apparent conflict, now that they wish to prosecute those companies after in effect giving them approval to go ahead with these manoeuvres in the beginning, or prior to the event?

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Madam Speaker, I am not prepared to make any comment on that subject today.