

Oral Questions

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL PICKFORD CONCERNING
EXTENSION OF JURISDICTION OVER COASTAL WATERS TO 200
MILES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Would the minister tell the House if Rear Admiral Reginald Pickford, the maritime forces Pacific commander, was stating government policy when at a press conference in British Columbia on Friday the Rear Admiral stated that Canada should not take any action or seek the 200 mile limit to protect our resources because we do not have the muscle to enforce it?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Carter: A supplementary to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the seriousness of this matter and in view of the fact that such a statement is made by a highly placed member of the military and could sabotage Canada's position, and a serious policy position has not been taken about the forthcoming Law of the Sea Conference, would the Acting Prime Minister give an assurance that the Rear Admiral and people in this position will not be allowed to make further statements of that nature, because I think it is a betrayal of the position taken by our fishermen and the position taken at the Law of the Sea Conference.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs was correct when he said that the Rear Admiral was not speaking government policy, and I am sure the hon. gentleman will agree that our purpose at the Law of the Sea Conference is to obtain general agreement on a 200 mile limit, in which case we would not need military forces to defend it.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, I realize what the Acting Prime Minister has said, but I repeat my question: would he give the House an assurance that disciplinary action will be taken against Rear Admiral Pickford in order to discourage others from making the same kind of statement?

Mr. Sharp: I have heard the representations of the hon. gentleman.

ALLEGED INVASION OF CANADIAN TERRITORY BY BUFFALO
POLICE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. S. Victor Railton (Welland): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has the minister knowledge of the incursion or invasion into Canadian territory by the Buffalo police over the weekend? It was reported that they chased a Canadian truck over the Peace Bridge and engaged in a fight with the driver and occupants on Canadian soil, only leaving hurriedly at the appearance of the Canadian police. Has the Minister made a strong protest to the U.S.A. as a result of this flagrant violation of international law?

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have been made aware of the incident to which the hon. member refers, and I have caused an inquiry to be made so that all the circumstances can be disclosed.

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Supplementary to the same question, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs if, in his representations to the United States authorities, he will specifically state what police from the United States can and cannot do in this country to make sure that this never happens again.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend may be assured that once the facts are made known, the appropriate comments will be made to the United States.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

NORRIS COMMISSION—REQUEST FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO
DOCUMENTS IN ARCHIVES

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that the officials of his department have now scrutinized the papers of the Norris inquiry in the public archives, I wonder if the minister would be good enough to tell us when we and members of the public will have access to those papers.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, as I think I informed the hon. member and others who have written, the transcript and indices are available together with exhibits. Other material is either of a privileged or private nature, part of the basis for which was set out in a cabinet directive which I believe the hon. member has. That is the situation. The material is private and privileged. Sometimes it involves either personal property of Mr. Justice Norris, who conducted the inquiry, or it is private and confidential material between solicitor and client, or that type of thing. That is the assessment which was made. I have not seen the material myself.

Mr. Lawrence: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the only papers which the minister has graciously consented should be made public are those which were already public ten years ago, and in view of the fact that our interest and the interest of others obviously must focus on the research material, the correspondence and similar documents, and in view of the fact that the minister's officials have now scrutinized that material, I wonder if he could tell us just what is there that is so secret that nobody can take a look at it?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I have already responded.

An hon. Member: So did Nixon.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): It is a matter of public policy. The advice I am acting on is that the material is of a privileged nature and should not be revealed under the 30 year rule.