[*Translation*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

AIR-INDIA AFFAIR—ALLEGED DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the case of the Air India disaster, where an explosion on board claimed 329 victims.

The Minister keeps repeating the same answer over and over again, like a broken record: The RCMP is investigating. We know the RCMP is investigating. The investigation has been going on for two and a half years now, and there have been some very strange developments during that time.

First of all, information available prior to the disaster was ignored instead of being used to prevent what happened. Today, tapes containing information that might have helped the RCMP in its investigation have been erased.

I would ask the Minister to be more specific, and instead of repeating that an investigation is going on, could he inform the House how many tapes were erased in this way? Could he tell us when the data were erased from these audio tapes? And could the Minister, and this is particular important, inform the House why a Government agency decided to erase information that might have been useful to the RCMP in its investigation? That is what Canadians want to know. Put your cards on the table!

[*English*]

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question several times today. For the benefit of the Hon. Member I will answer it again and I will give the same answer.

As the Hon. Member and all other Members of this House well know, there is an active criminal investigation ongoing, the greatest in the history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The hon. gentleman would be the first to criticize the Government and the Solicitor General if I said something which would jeopardize the successful completion of that investigation.

[*Translation*]

REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, by remaining silent, the Minister is making it very difficult for Canadians to understand why the RCMP has been hindered in its investigation since the very beginning.

It is unlikely that taped information that was important to the investigation could have been erased.

Since the RCMP's investigation has produced no results after two and a half years, why is the Government refusing to take the obvious next step and appoint a royal commission of inquiry to clear up this case so that we will finally know the role the Government played, either in trying to prevent the explosion or in solving this crime?

[*English*]

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, I suggest that the Hon. Member is being irresponsible in suggesting that the Government is doing nothing and that the investigation is going nowhere. That is not correct. If that were the case we would have terminated the investigation.

I have advised the Hon. Member that that is not so. The investigation is very active. It is ongoing. It is the most extensive in the history of the force. I hope that we will be able to announce some results in the very near future.

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GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

PANEL RULING AFFECTING WEST COAST FISH EXPORTS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Representatives of the B.C. fishing industry from UFAWU, PRASCU, the Fisheries Council, and the PTA, appeared before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans for four hours this morning. The Government failed to produce even two members to allow the committee to conduct its business in relation to this $750 million industry.

My question flows from the Minister's statement as reported at page 10922 of *Hansard* of November 18 of this year when he said:

> —we will be opposing that recommendation when it reaches the GATT council.

Is that the position of the Government of Canada? When the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said "we" did he mean the Government of Canada?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I do not recall the context in which that statement was made but I do clearly recall stating that the Government of Canada will meet its obligations to fishermen in this matter and its obligations under the GATT.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. According to evidence given today to the Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, if the panel ruling is not opposed by the Government of Canada one-half of the B.C. fishing industry will be wiped out. I now have the confidential panel ruling from Geneva and have some understanding of why the Government did not want it released to the fishing industry or to the public.