

Oral Questions

it would be equally possible or appropriate in standing committees of the House for reference to be made to the Economic Council reports that provide a valuable comment upon a number of matters of proposed policy. I would think that would contribute usefully to the debate. I think it is more dubious whether we should establish sort of a congressional committee in which economic policies would be discussed having as a text the views of an outside body such as the Economic Council. I think it is more profitable in our system of government to deal with the proposals of the Minister of Finance.

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TRANSPORT**INVESTIGATION INTO DREDGING CONTRACTS—REQUEST FOR
TABLING OF LETTERS REQUESTING INVESTIGATION**

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Transport. On March 4 the minister stated he would not table letters in respect of his order of inquiry into the Hamilton dredging irregularities, and subsequently in respect of the Quebec dredging, because it would be unjust to mention the people named in them. In view of the fact that serious charges have now been laid against 12 officials who have attempted to defraud two governments and the Hamilton Harbour Commission, would the minister today or tomorrow table his letters now that we have the names of those persons criminally involved?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): I think the hon. gentleman is right. I will have to check.

An hon. Member: We are always right.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Yes, always! I will check with justice about the letters which have been sent.

Mr. Stanfield: Don't do that.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): No? The Leader of the Opposition does not want me to do that.

Mr. Stanfield: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ouellet: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Just arriving in the House, I am told that opposition members are complaining about my absence. I want to remind them that if I was delayed it is precisely because I was discussing a matter dealing with the British Columbia ports. I am totally in disagreement with the innuendo that nobody is looking after labour relations.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver South on a point of order.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I should like to say on a point of order that the minister is misinformed. The complaint is not that he is out of the House. The complaint is that he is

[*Mr. Sharp.*]

trying to run two portfolios at a time when the other portfolio for which he is substituting for a minister needs a full-time minister.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, apropos to the comments of my genial friend, the Minister of Transport, it is not that I do not want him to table the letters; I do. The point is that I do not want him to consult the Minister of Justice who will probably tell him not to do it.

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HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS**PROPOSED BAN ON IMPORT OF BLUE FIBRE ASBESTOS—
GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Hon. Martin O'Connell (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact that this week the province of Saskatchewan banned the use of blue fibre asbestos in places of employment, and in view of the fact that blue fibre asbestos on inhalation may cause an always fatal cancer known as mesothelioma even in those exposed for short periods of time and is a product used in the Johns-Manville plant in Scarborough, will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs agree to use the Hazardous Products Act to ban the import of this product into Canada.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for dealing so quickly with such an important matter. My department officials are now discussing with the Department of Justice to find the best way to draft regulations which could efficiently and effectively cover this matter.

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[*English*]

TRANSPORT**INVESTIGATION INTO DREDGING CONTRACTS—POSSIBLE
SUSPENSION OF PAYMENTS TO CERTAIN BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPANIES**

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. With regard to the dredging contracts that were let in British Columbia to Marwell Dredging, Canadian Dredging and Sceptre Dredging, and in view of the fact that payments had been discontinued under a legal opinion to those in Quebec, Marine Industries Limited, would the minister advise the House if payments are now suspended to the British Columbia companies that have been charged under the Criminal Code?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): I will have to inquire about this and I may give an answer tomorrow.