

Oral Questions

speaking for members of parliament. They spoke for themselves.

Mr. MacGuigan: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the confusion arises from the identification of a group or committee. In fact, there were discussions among backbenchers of all parties. None of those backbenchers was designated by their party, but in each case they spoke for themselves and other members of their party.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There is question of privilege on the floor of the House at the present moment. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby has raised his question of privilege in the form of a denial that his party was in any way involved in what were referred to as discussions or negotiations prior to the introduction of the bill. In any event, there has now been contrary comment in respect to that position. I get back to the point, without in any way resolving or endeavouring to resolve what has been raised as a legitimate question of privilege and without accepting it as such, that what has been raised is a matter of considerable importance and substance in the debate on the bill, which precisely gets back to the original point that when a bill is before the House for debate the terms and conditions of that bill ought not to be the subject of questions during the question period.

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[Translation]

HOUSING**SAVINGS PLAN FOR PURCHASE OF HOME—PARTICIPATION OF CAISSES POPULAIRES**

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance.

In view of the fact that a home ownership savings plan was proposed in his budget speech, and that caisses populaires were foremost in offering mortgage loans to the population as a whole, can the minister advise the House whether, like chartered banks, caisses populaires will be allowed to sell federally sponsored home ownership savings plans?

[English]

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, while it is impossible for me to give a definitive list of such investments, I intend to recommend that the list of qualified investments be extended by regulation such as to parallel those investments which I feel qualify for registered retirement savings plans. This list would include such things as deposits with a credit union or caisse populaire, shares of a mutual fund corporation and units of a mutual fund trust.

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ENERGY**FUNDY TIDAL POWER PROJECT—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON DISCUSSIONS WITH STATE OF MAINE**

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy,

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Mines and Resources. I understand that the minister had meetings today with officials from the State of Maine in relation to Fundy tidal power and related power matters. I wonder if he is in a position to inform the House of the progress of these discussions or future occurrences?

● (1500)

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, this was just an initial contact with the Maine officials, in the process of which we discussed the development of the St. John's River, the impact of Fundy tidal power development and also deep water oil ports on the east coast. We decided, as a result of that meeting, to have further official contacts, of which I shall advise the House from time to time. May I express my appreciation to the hon. member for having arranged the introduction.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**GOVERNMENT POSITION ON INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION**

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. Now that the minister has had an opportunity to review the evidence related to alleged incidents of violence, intimidation and related matters within the Seafarers' International Union, and now that the minister has had an opportunity to consider a letter from his counterpart in Ontario dealing with the same subject, will he indicate if he feels there are sufficient grounds for holding an inquiry into SIU activities in past months and years? If not, why not?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the answer is that we have not yet had ample opportunity to review the submissions from the Solicitor General's office in Ontario, to see if anything new has been added to what was known to us before. Of course, at the same time certain investigations are still going on.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, may I direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Justice. As the government has ordered previous inquiries into incidents not dissimilar to those now allegedly involving the SIU, will the minister say if he has reviewed the evidence which was required before other inquiries were undertaken and will he say whether there is now sufficient evidence to warrant the holding of an inquiry at the present time? How does the amount of evidence which was available previously before other enquiries were commissioned compare with the amount of evidence now available? I ask this as the minister persists in saying that he needs more time before deciding whether an inquiry into SIU activities is warranted.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate to take a reasonable amount of time in looking at any particular submissions before reaching conclusions. There have been other occasions where significant amounts of evidence of serious occurrences, together with strong submissions from the labour movement in the country and the management involved, together supported an inquiry. Much of