

Oral Questions

Edwards and a senior officer of the Atomic Energy Control Board before the Porter commission.

The Atomic Energy Control Board has assured me that all reactors which are operating are operating safely. The board has also stated that it will be issuing tomorrow an updated review of the current licensing situation in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question relates to whether what the public has learned up until now from the minister and his agencies is credible. That is the question which really goes to the heart of the matter. In spite of the minister's statements to the contrary, and in spite of public utterances on behalf of the agencies under his control, some of them continuing up until yesterday, it now appears there have been gross defects in the design and procedures in relation to the safety of our citizens regarding power plants in Ontario.

When did the minister first find out about these orders which were issued in secret and with no public disclosure, but which obviously have a great deal to do with public concern about safety? When did the minister first find out about these orders?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned a moment ago, in answer to the first question, that a statement will be issued tomorrow. In a matter which is as technical as this and which covers so many different aspects, I think it is important that there be a full statement, and that is what I have been assured will be issued tomorrow.

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THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION**QUEBEC REGULATION RESTRICTING ONTARIO RESIDENTS FROM WORKING IN QUEBEC**

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister: it concerns his response to a letter he will have received from the Premier of Ontario asking the federal government to challenge the constitutionality of a Quebec regulation regarding restricting Ontario residents from working in the province of Quebec as of July 1. I would like to ask the Prime Minister what his response has been to that letter from the Premier of Ontario.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have just read that telex, but I did talk about the matter with the premier a couple of weeks ago. He raised it with me in a telephone conversation. At that time the ministers of labour of Quebec and Ontario were meeting. I told the premier that if those meetings were unsuccessful, and if he was unable to settle this very important matter with the premier of Quebec, I would gladly hear from them further. I think this telex is pursuant to that. He is suggesting a reference to the Supreme Court of the regulation of the province of Quebec and I will refer his telex to the Department of Justice for advice.

[Mr. Gillespie.]

I can indicate quite openly what I told the premier the other day on the telephone. I thought it was quite inconsistent for the province of Quebec to argue some kind of common market in a future Canada and to begin even now to prevent freedom of mobility of labour between the provinces. I have no hesitation in saying that we oppose that kind of legislation or regulation. As to whether a reference can be made and what the basis of the reference would be, I would expect the Minister of Justice to advise me very soon.

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, when that advice is proffered by the Minister of Justice, will the Prime Minister, observing protocol with regard to advising the premier of Ontario, advise the House of Commons as to the outcome of that decision because of the interest of many thousands of people in the province of Ontario in this very important matter?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, that decision will of course be made known if there is a reference to the court. It will be stated publicly. It is also apparent to me from the premier's telex that he thinks other provinces might be interested in such a reference. That is why, beyond having advice from the Minister of Justice, we will have to learn the views of other provinces, including Quebec, because it would be our preference, if we do go the reference route, to make sure that the provinces concerned contribute to drafting the terms of reference for the supreme court.

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PRIVILEGE**MR. STEVENS—COMMENTS OF MINISTER OF STATE (SMALL BUSINESS)**

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I have given you notice, first in a preliminary manner on Monday last, and earlier today in the usual, more formal manner. I point out to Your Honour that the right to raise this question of privilege was reserved by the Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole (Mr. Turner) when he said last Friday that the blues would be examined on Monday and that a decision would be rendered at that time.

My question of privilege arises out of very serious allegations made in this House last Friday by the Minister of State (Small Business) (Mr. Abbott). Those allegations clearly imply that I have taken advantage of the banking system in Canada to make a fast dollar, that I "lured a great many innocent shareholders" into a banking enterprise over 12 years ago, and that I subsequently made a "very comfortable profit out of it and left a lot of other people holding the bag".

• (1502)

The minister in making these statements did so in support of his reflections on my character and on my ability to function as a member of parliament.