

ter of the Environment, Mr. Davis; the second acting minister is the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Daniel MacDonald; and the—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker; he was minister of agriculture in that very excellent government of Premier Campbell. The parliamentary secretary is that very capable Member of Parliament for Kamloops-Cariboo, Mr. Marchand, who will continue to answer for the minister in the House, though of course he does not have the legal power to sign documents on behalf of the minister.

Mr. Nielsen: Nor to answer policy questions.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

FAMILY COURTS—SUGGESTED DISCUSSIONS WITH BRITISH COLUMBIA ON ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFIED SYSTEM

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I have a question I should like to ask the Minister of Justice. Having in mind the statement made over the weekend by the Attorney General of British Columbia to the effect that that province is considering the possibility of provincial-federal co-operation toward establishing a unified family court system, may I ask the minister whether he is aware of the gravity of these broken home situations, and will he give consideration to the representations of British Columbia?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we will, of course, be very willing to have discussions with British Columbia or, indeed, with any province about methods of improving the settlement of family problems that become the subject of litigation. The whole question of family law is under consideration by this government as well as by the Law Reform Commission. I look forward to their recommendations which may also deal with the question of divided jurisdiction and the possibility of overcoming some of the problems involved.

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CANADA LABOUR CODE

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF JOHNSTON COMMISSION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Labour whether it is the government's intention to implement the recommendations of the Johnston commission on the Canada Labour Code?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to the second part of the recommendations, in terms of general application we are studying the recommendations and the department hopes to come to a decision on the matter within the next two weeks.

Oral Questions

Mr. McGrath: In view of the fact the commission's report has been in the hands of the government since December, may I ask the minister when the government proposes to bring in amendments to the Canada Labour Code?

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, we will first have to come to a policy decision whether to act on the general over-all recommendations to which the hon. member is referring. It will then be necessary for the cabinet to approve that decision and legislation might then be placed on the order paper. As to when such amendments will be considered in the House, the hon. member's guess is as good as mine at this stage.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

POSSIBILITY OF AMENDMENTS TO BAIL REFORM ACT AND LEGISLATION ON FIREARMS IN LIGHT OF SHOOTING OF POLICEMEN

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. In light of the shooting down of a third Toronto policeman over the weekend, is the minister prepared (a) to reconsider his views on the need for amendment of the Bail Reform Act, and (b) to consider implementing the suggestions made by the police association regarding the ownership and registration of firearms in Canada?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, it has been the clear view of the government from the time of the last changes in the bail law that we would examine the experience of this law and be prepared to make changes as a need became apparent. Certainly it is not yet apparent that the changes made to the law are the cause of any of the problems to which the hon. member is referring. He should be aware of the fact that many people were at large on bail under the previous law, and indeed it was simply a matter of the poorer people being kept in jail while those with money, whether their own or with the assistance of friends, criminal or otherwise, were at large. Therefore I think it is quite wrong to point the finger at the changes made in the bail law as being the cause of any of these troubles. Notwithstanding that, I believe that with additional experience more can be done to operate the bail system, or the freedom to be at large system, in a way that is more fully consistent with the defence of the subject in our society.

Mr. Stackhouse: May I ask the minister whether there is any possibility of bringing in legislation regarding the ownership and registration of firearms? I would appreciate his answering that part of the question.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, as has been indicated to the House previously, this is a question which is under consideration by the government. In effect, the problem is that regulations in relation to firearms most certainly interfere with the ordinary activities of a lot of law-abiding citizens, whereas in no way are they certain to interfere with the activities of criminals.