

[English]

AUDITOR GENERAL

DOWNGRADING OF POSITIONS OF SENIOR OFFICERS

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the President of the Privy Council in his capacity as Government House Leader. Does the authority he is exercising for the President of the Treasury Board in the House today include the authority to indicate to the House that the red circling of the senior staff in the office of the Auditor General will now be discontinued?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): No, Mr. Speaker, my authority does not extend that far, but it does extend far enough to ask the hon. member to co-operate with me in cleaning up the other items on the order paper as quickly as possible.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): You are a poor loser.

DOWNGRADING OF POSITIONS OF SENIOR OFFICERS— RECONSTITUTING OF COMMITTEE

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): As it appears quite certain that the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff of the Auditor General are being greatly impaired, will the government review the entire situation with a view to reconstituting the government committee which was examining this matter?

An hon. Member: Will you come?

Mr. Baldwin: My question is, in view of the fact—

Mr. Trudeau: To whom are you directing the question?

Mr. Baldwin: I am directing my supplementary question to the President of the Privy Council who apparently is answering today for the President of the Treasury Board. Will the minister discuss with the President of the Treasury Board the immediate necessity of reconstituting the government committee which was dealing with this matter so that at the earliest possible time the order downgrading the staff of the Auditor General can be revoked and proper arrangements made so that his staff will receive recognition?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to convey this representation to the President of the Treasury Board. I hasten to add that I was acting for the President of the Treasury Board with respect to the matter which related to the business of the House. I am not acting for him in any other respect.

Mr. Baldwin: I will direct my supplementary question to the Prime Minister who seemed quite interested in this matter a little while ago.

Mr. Trudeau: What do you want to ask me?

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Will the Prime Minister reconsider the position of one of his ministers in this whole matter and, if necessary, ask for his resignation?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): As a result of this whole episode, Mr. Speaker, I certainly will advise my ministers that if there are any unanimous recommendations from standing committees over which the opposition has control, we should not automatically give implementation or credence to those recommendations from a committee which the opposition controls.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Prime Minister consider implementing the unanimous recommendation made last year by the Public Accounts Committee dealing with the *Bona-venture*, which the government apparently did not like?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL SECURITY

NEGOTIATIONS FOR RELEASE OF JAMES CROSS BY KIDNAPPERS—NAME OF FLQ REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

A few moments ago he told us that the counsel for the governments, Mr. Demers, had negotiated the release of Mr. James Cross. Could he say who was the other representative?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, at this stage I cannot answer the question, all the less as I did not understand it.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR RELATIONS

USE OF UNITED STATES COST OF LIVING INDICES IN CANADIAN WAGE INCREASE AGREEMENTS

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): I have a question I should like to ask the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker. Having regard to discussions which are now under way in the automobile industry, does the government support the use of United States cost of living indices as a means of calculating wage increases in connection with Canadian wage agreements?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is inviting the minister to make a statement which I suggest is much too general in nature. I do not think a question in those terms is acceptable at this point.