

with these individuals yesterday, of exchanging views with them, and of receiving their representations. I must say that I understand their fears and concerns. I trust that I was able to allay them in some measure.

Some Hon. Members: Not at all.

Miss MacDonald: I also wish to state that at the conclusion of the meeting, they thanked me for the opportunity of having had the discussion.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get to the nub of it. Will the Minister rise in her place and agree that fishermen are workers in fact and that they should be covered by the Unemployment Insurance Act?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some confusion in the Hon. Member's mind. Fishermen are covered by the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Mr. Fulton: Are they workers, and are they to stay covered?

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THE ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS IN QUEBEC—ROLE OF MINISTER OF REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. A few minutes ago he reproached the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie by indicating, in a way, that he should not ask questions related to investments in Quebec. Did the Deputy Prime Minister seriously mean to imply that investments made by the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion in Quebec should deny the Opposition the right to pose questions to him on the integrity of that Minister?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not mean at all to stop the liberal flow of questions directed to me in my capacity as Deputy Prime Minister, as Minister of National Defence or, at the moment, as Acting Prime Minister.

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE REFERRAL

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in light of what transpired again today, why does the Deputy Prime Minister consistently reject the notion of sending this whole matter to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, this is a curious question which keeps getting raised. I think Hon. Members know that my distinguished colleague, the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, will defend his

Point of Order—Mr. Gray (Windsor West)

Estimates tonight. He is going to be available to answer questions on departmental responsibilities. If the Hon. Member doesn't know that, he doesn't know anything.

● (1500)

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POINTS OF ORDER

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS—MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a point of order about your rulings during Question Period about ministerial responsibility. I respectfully submit that the questions which you did not allow to be placed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens) were clearly phrased and intended to refer to the Minister's handling of his responsibilities concerning his Department and his administration of that Department. Second, even if the questions related to the compliance of the Minister with the conflict of interest guidelines, I submit that they were still matters of the responsibility of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), in the letter which has been cited often in this House, says:

I wish it to be understood clearly by all Ministers that they have an individual responsibility to prevent conflicts of interests, including those that might arise out of activities of their spouses.

It may be that the Prime Minister has delegated to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) the job of administering the process of the application of the conflict of interest guidelines, but the Prime Minister has said very clearly that the responsibility for complying with those guidelines is on the shoulder of each and every Minister.

Surely if the Prime Minister of Canada says in writing what he considers to be the responsibilities of his Ministers, then I submit with the utmost respect that it should be good enough for you, Sir.

If you accept what the Prime Minister of Canada has said, and it is clear that questions can be validly directed to Ministers about how they comply with those guidelines, I want to bring my remarks on this point to a conclusion by bringing to your attention what I think is a very important precedent.

In February, 1983 questions were directed in this House to the Hon. Marc Lalonde when he was Minister of Finance. These questions related to a matter which, as the then Opposition alleged, involved conflict of interest, which we submit was in that case unfounded—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: You have blown your case.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West):—but that matter arose when the Hon. Marc Lalonde was Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the portfolio he held prior to being Minister of