

Oral Questions

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH FRANCE ON STATUS OF
ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Bearing in mind the right hon. gentleman's well known interest in the patriation of the constitution, may I ask whether, in any talks he might have had since he was Prime Minister with the French president or any authorities in France, there has been any discussion about the status of St. Pierre and Miquelon with a view to removing an anomaly of history which, while it does not greatly disturb Atlantic Canada, might well have considerable significance in the event of substantial oil discoveries and the implementation of a 200-mile fishing zone?

• (1500)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I must humbly confess that I did not have the gall to raise that with the President. I do not think that the Leader of the Opposition raised with the President of the United States the question of repatriating the panhandle either.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of the Prime Minister's well known ability in gall—not Gaul but gall—I wonder whether the right hon. gentleman would seriously consider the next time he or officials of the external affairs department, which seems to be more busy in travel than discussion, have the opportunity, raising the matter so this anomaly of history can be removed and we do not have to worry about balancing the interests of two small islands against the territorial mass of Canada.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, in such important matters as this concerning Canadian territorial ambitions I would think it would be useful to have at least a bipartisan policy, so I will approach the Leader of the Opposition, when he is here, to see whether he is interested in forming a package in which we could claim a lot of land, including St. Pierre and Miquelon, the Alaskan panhandle and perhaps parts of Maine for New Brunswick. If I can get that support for a bipartisan policy we might also have a joint election campaign.

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AIR CANADA

ALLEGED CHANGE IN REGULATIONS GOVERNING ISSUANCE
OF PASSES TO WIVES OF MEMBERS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, may I refer to a question that I asked on June 25 which is reported at page 14840 of *Hansard*. Leaving out the portions that have nothing to do with the question, I said this:

Naturally, I am concerned over the revelations, to use the mildest term possible, as reported in the *Toronto Sun* yesterday's date and the *Globe and Mail* of today, concerning promiscuity in the issuance of passes. In the absence of the minister concerned—

I was referring, of course, to the Minister of Supply and Services.

[Mr. Buchanan.]

—who apparently admitted everything contained in the statements, I will just ask one question: Has there been any change made by Air Canada concerning qualifications on the part of spouses for passes, and why is it that a pass was issued to one described as a common law wife, an expression which of course is non-existent except in the vocabulary of certain people?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would not speak of changes in policy but I would confirm that Air Canada does have a general policy of dealing with common law wives, which they know has a definition in connection with passes, for instance, for their employees and presumably by extension for other categories. Of course, the expression is also well known in the administration of other programs and is becoming better known all the time in Canada.

Mr. Diefenbaker: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister in question made common law wives well known in the vocabulary of our country. My question arising out of his answer is this: Why did the corporation grant the request of the minister to issue a pass for which there is no justification to one whom he described quite frankly as his common law wife?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I think that answer was given rather fully in the same case when the incident was raised, and quite frankly I regret the right hon. gentleman taking the time of this House to raise that specific point at this time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I now give the answer and I ask what portion of it the minister is referring to. I feel very sorry he is exasperated and I express my deep regret to him in that regard. The Minister of Transport replied as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is accurate to say that that was the description used in the past.

That is, a common law wife.

However, I will be glad to have a look at what is the current policy of Air Canada with regard to passes and to report more fully on whether there have been any changes since the time the right hon. gentleman was Prime Minister.

The minister says today the answer was given on June 25. Why the cover-up, I would ask?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the right hon. gentleman taking this trouble to draw my attention in the House to the fact that the word "past" appears in the third line of the reply, whereas the word "pass" should appear. I will see whether that correction helps him.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. LALONDE—ANSWER TO ACCUSATION OF INFLUENCE
CONCERNING FREE VOTE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I wish to rise on a question of privilege concerning a statement made some days ago by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) and which, in my opinion, is detrimental to the privileges of