

NATIONAL HARBOURS BOARD

ALLEGED WARNING BY VICE-CHAIRMAN TO HALIFAX REPRESENTATIVES NOT TO DISCUSS SHED RENTAL POLICY WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Transport aware of the statement attributed to the vice-chairman, Mr. Beaudet, of the National Harbours Board to members of the Halifax branch of the Shipping Federation of Canada after or during a meeting held in Montreal, to the effect that these responsible corporate citizens were warned not to discuss the proposed shed rental policy about to be imposed on the port of Halifax-Dartmouth on May 1 with members of the public or members of parliament and, if so, is this particular style of coercion and irresponsible conduct on the part of senior public servants acceptable to the minister?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am worried about the question put by the hon. member but, unfortunately, I am not aware of the facts. Let me check and tomorrow I will indicate exactly what the situation is.

REQUEST FOR DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF SHED RENTAL POLICY AT HALIFAX

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, in light of recent events, is the minister prepared to order or direct the National Harbours Board to shelve for the time being this particular policy in respect of shed rentals until such time as the Halifax port authority is given expanded authority, as has been done in Montreal and Vancouver and, if so, would the minister assure the House that the revamped Halifax port authority will be given a veto power over the imposition of such facile and discriminatory policies aimed allegedly, and again I quote from Mr. Beaudet, "equalizing all ports east of Montreal"?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): I will answer at the same time tomorrow.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT RESPECTING GOVERNMENT'S VIEW OF RIGHT OF MEMBER TO ACCESS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the frustrations experienced by many members of parliament in dealing with boards and commissions, as evidenced by my colleague's point of order and others in recent days, I wonder if the right hon. gentleman when he returns from Europe might consider making a statement on motions giving the government's view that it in no way wishes to restrict access by members to boards, commissions and public servants generally? In this way the right hon. gentleman could clear up what is obviously a very frustrating matter to those of us who are trying to do our jobs here.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I missed the point of order the hon. member refers to, but I will gladly look into his theoretical suggestion to see if I can give an adequate reply.

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ABORTION

REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Will he clarify which statement reflects the government's position on present guidelines governing therapeutic abortion clinics operating in Canadian hospitals, one as expressed in a letter dated August 6, 1970 from the present Minister of Finance in which he wrote:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

The second statement expressing government policy was a statement of the present Minister of Justice in October, 1974 as follows:

I advised the appropriate authorities, including therapeutic abortion committees, that the Criminal Code provisions regarding abortion were to be applied strictly: that social and economic considerations were not to be taken into account in determining whether a pregnancy lawfully could be terminated.

Would the Prime Minister indicate which of those statements reflects government policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the quotation by the hon. member gives the entire position of the Minister of Justice. He has taken the quite proper position that the Criminal Code should govern this matter, and the Criminal Code refers to health as involving many considerations apart from purely physical ones. This is the way the judges are presumably interpreting the law.

An hon. Member: Is that the final view?

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[Translation]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INCREASED EXPENDITURES—GOVERNMENT POSITION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I also offer the right hon. Prime Minister my best wishes for a very good trip. His important work will certainly help our country.

[English]

My question to the right hon. Prime Minister in no way involves the matter of transfer of payments to the provinces or payments under social programs. Since government expenditures for goods and services alone have risen 37 per cent in two years, by the government's own figures, how does the right hon. Prime Minister explain this to the private sector, management and labour, during his consensus talks?