

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Chrétien (St. Maurice-Lafleche): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the leader of the house.

Since the Leader of the Opposition did not have sufficient time last night, would the house allow the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Balcer) to finish the speech of the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister did not have time to complete his speech, would he allow the hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan) to do so?

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Later:]

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is intended for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, during the debate on the distinctive national flag, Mr. Speaker, you made a ruling which was approved by the press, as well as by all members of the house. You said, at that time, that you had studied for three or four days the matter under dispute, in order to decide whether the two projects should be divided.

This is my question to the Prime Minister. Did his advisers suggest to the Prime Minister, or is it the latter who suggested to the advisers, that you should make such a ruling? In other words, before making his statement yesterday afternoon and before you made your ruling, did the Prime Minister know what the ruling would be? I am putting this question to the Prime Minister.

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am very surprised at this question, but I hasten to answer it. There was absolutely no communication between any member of this house and myself on this important question. The Clerk of this house, who is my chief adviser, and I did considerable research on the matter, but I want to assure all hon. members that there was no collaboration, no communication and, as far as I know, no leak from my office nor from the office of the Clerk.

[Mr. Chatterton.]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

INQUIRY AS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF
GILL REPORT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Does the government have any intention of bringing forward amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act as a result of the Gill committee report?

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the policy of the government with respect to this matter was put forward by the Prime Minister in the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne.

Mr. Grafftey: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In spite of the minister's reply, could the house be given some idea of whether the government plans to bring these changes forward, as reported, and when?

Mr. MacEachen: I think the situation was set out at that time, Mr. Speaker. The timing will depend on the disposition of other parliamentary business.

TRADE

GATT—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Reid Scott (Danforth): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Trade and Commerce. In view of current newspaper reports that the United Nations conference on trade at Geneva has concluded with rather indecisive results, I wonder whether the minister would make an early statement on motions bringing the house up to date on the results of this conference.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I have been speaking to my colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and either he or I will make a report as soon as it can be put together.

IMMIGRATION

JOSIF VERGAKIS—STATEMENT ON REASON FOR
DETENTION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. René Tremblay (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition inquired about the case of a seaman, Josif Vergakis. I have looked into this case. Vergakis deserted his ship on August 26, 1963. He was