

Oral Questions

We now learn that foreign publications, specifically soft-porn girlie magazines such as *Penthouse*, *Hustler* and *Playboy* receive preferred second-class mail classification status.

The Government's postal corporation discriminates against professional publications such as this, and also against religious publications such as the *Presbyterian Record* and *The United Church Observer*, yet gives preferential status to girlie magazines. On this issue the Cabinet should intervene and ensure that, if not a better postal rate, then publications such as *Beef in British Columbia* should receive at least the same rate as *Playboy*.

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TARIFFS**CALL FOR REMOVAL OF TARIFF ON UNITED STATES CHRISTMAS TREES**

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, as you know, Christmas tree growers from Quebec, Ontario, and the maritime provinces recently gathered on Parliament Hill to protest the imposition of a 30 per cent tariff on imports of U.S. Christmas trees into Canada. The growers fear that if this tariff is not removed the U.S. will retaliate, causing economic hardship to thousands of Canadians involved in Canada's \$90 million Christmas tree export industry.

After their demonstration they met with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), but I am told that the Minister did not understand and that the Government will not remove this counter-productive tariff.

This ill-conceived tariff should be eliminated immediately. The Government is sacrificing an important Canadian industry and important Canadian jobs. This approach is counter-productive and extremely unfair to Canada's Christmas tree growers.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

THE ADMINISTRATION**OERLIKON AFFAIR—REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ESTABLISH PUBLIC JUDICIAL INQUIRY**

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by asking whether the Government has resigned, considering that only eight or nine of 40 Ministers are in attendance for the Oral Question Period.

Mr. Beatty: Where is John Turner?

Mr. Kaplan: He is not in the Government, you are.

My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The Official Opposition request for a public judicial inquiry into

the Oerlikon affair has rallied strong support from a huge number of editorial writers throughout the country, and serious-minded journalists have reported statements by businessmen who are quite familiar with the Government's toll-gating pay-off scheme. A criminal investigation into the conduct of a Minister and his cronies does not extend to major pay-off issues, so I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister: Does he not realize that the RCMP probe is too restricted and, now that the scheme is headlined in all newspapers, is he not prepared to give us that public inquiry?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Hon. Member had to withdraw and retract some allegations that he made in this House. Here again he is trying to suggest other forms of innuendo and smear.

However, to get to the base of his question, that has been answered on many occasions. The senior law officers of the Crown have indicated in their best wisdom that it would be inappropriate to run a parallel judicial inquiry while an RCMP investigation is being undertaken. Legal experts across the country are of the same opinion. Even one year ago the Hon. Member himself and his Leader were opposed to the commissioning of a commission of inquiry to investigate these sorts of matters. At that time they were recommending a parliamentary committee.

So, given that assortment of support for the route that the Government has taken, we believe that the Government has chosen the right course of action.

● (1120)

REQUEST THAT RCMP INQUIRY BE ENLARGED

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Against our views, and the views of all the editorialists and journalists, if the Government is determined to limit the inquiry of the RCMP investigation I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister this. The inquiry announced by the Prime Minister in the press release on January 18 refers only to a complete investigation into the property transactions in the St-Jean-sur-Richelieu area linked to the Oerlikon plant. Will the Minister enlarge the inquiry to look at all of the questions relating to the allocation of the Oerlikon contract, including the fact that there are three friends of the Government working in that Oerlikon contract, and to all the circumstances that have been revealed in the House over the last two weeks?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): I find it incredible that the Hon. Member does not read his own mail. The Commissioner of the RCMP, in response to a letter that the Hon. Member directed to the Commissioner, replied, and I quote in part:

—confirm to you that my instructions to our investigators are that they are to examine all aspects, direct and peripheral, of that transaction, to determine if there are violations of the law that should be placed before a court for consideration.