

Oral Questions

boundary dispute? If agreement is not reached, for example, on a quota for scallops in 1978, can he inform the House what will happen to the interim fisheries agreement which presently exists between our two countries?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in case there is some misunderstanding, I must remind the hon. member that some of the quotas he has alluded to are, either in total or in part, taken on the American side of what would be an eventual boundary. These are transboundary stocks in which we have an interest and for this reason, of course, we do not agree with the American position with regard to the conservation measures we have recommended.

As to the final outcome, the hon. member will have to bear with me a little longer. I have expressed the hope that we will have by the end of this week knowledge of whether the agreement is, or is not, possible.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST**EFFECT OF GUIDELINES ON FORMER MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS**

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I address my question to the Prime Minister. It relates to the question first raised this afternoon by the Leader of the New Democratic Party concerning the appointment of Donald S. Macdonald to the board of directors of the MacDonnell-Douglas Corporation.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Does he not concede that the position of a former cabinet minister is quite distinct from that of a former deputy minister of a particular department, in the concept of collective agreement within cabinet and collective decision-making, particularly when the minister was the former minister of finance who will be very much concerned about an expenditure of \$2.3 billion for the acquisition of military aircraft?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is now arguing contrary to the position taken by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, who was arguing that they should be guided by the same guidelines. Now the hon. member is suggesting that they should be different. The position of the government was put before the House in December of 1976.

An hon. Member: Tabled.

Mr. Trudeau: It has been tabled. It has been made public and is known. If it had been unfair in some way, I would have expected members opposite to so state. They are not reticent in telling the government that it is too lenient with its former members and former officials. It was done at the time of a rather hotly debated issue raised in this House on the occasion of a former deputy minister being engaged in other business in Ottawa. We responded at the time with guidelines that seemed

[Mr. Crouse.]

to be fair in the sense that they did put a distance between a former position and the next successive position. They spelled out that there could be no serving of two masters simultaneously or in immediate succession, and they were accepted then, I believe, as reasonable. I repeat that Mr. Macdonald has adhered to these guidelines in their strictest sense.

If hon. members opposite want to propose stricter guidelines for the future which would apply to all members of the House and in a particular sense to former cabinet ministers and former civil servants, we are anxious to have their views.

Mr. Clark: We would like to do away with frozen trusts, for example.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is beginning to speak. You will note that it is three o'clock.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I have one supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It may not have occurred to the Prime Minister, who is very tired after his long trip, that that is precisely what we are trying to do: we are trying to improve the guidelines which he made, for they are not engraved in granite.

Is the Prime Minister aware of the fact that Mr. Macdonald has also been appointed to the board of directors of Shell Canada Limited, which has substantial interests in Syncrude and other federal projects, and does he not think that in light of this kind of development, where a minister in the cabinet, recently retired, was involved in energy policy decisions, he should at least reconsider his guidelines to make more stringent rules for cabinet ministers and former cabinet ministers?

Mr. Clark: Tell us about frozen trusts.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the important issue now is that I state—and the statement has not been challenged by the opposition—that the former minister of finance has respected the guidelines. If the hon. member opposite wants to argue that they should be stronger and that they should apply in future with some stringency, we are prepared to hear suggestions. I am just telling the opposition that those guidelines have been known to the House and the Canadian people since December, 1976, and the former minister has respected them.

● (1502)

We know it is a question which will always cause problems. If you say the distance will be two years, people will ask, "Why not five?" If you say there will be a conflict which must be resolved in one year, they will ask, "Why not two years?" It is very important not to put former citizens who served the Canadian public from the particular vantage point of parliament, whether as members of parliament and members of a government or, for that matter, members of the public service, in a position where they have to retire into nothingness. That is not the position we want to take.