

Mr. Diefenbaker: Then I would suggest a little better communication among members of the Cabinet.

Mr. Cossitt: Mr. Speaker, last March I placed a number of questions on the order paper on the subject of the Police and Security Planning and Analysis Group. All these questions were answered within what I consider a very reasonable length of time with the exception of one question, namely, No. 1,769. If the other questions could be answered as quickly as they were, I fail to see any valid reason for the delay in answering this particular question, which simply asks who were the employers during the previous five years of the 17 persons whose names the government has admitted in an answer to one of my previous questions and who comprise the Police and Security Planning and Analysis Group. If there is no reason for the government to desire to hide what these people were doing before they went to their new positions, would the parliamentary secretary give the House some indication when this question will be answered?

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I will get in touch with the minister and report back to the hon. member.

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

FISHERIES

RECIPROCAL PRIVILEGES WITH UNITED STATES

Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 26 to move, seconded by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard):

That this House do now adjourn for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely: the impasse which exists between Canada and the United States of America for a continuing agreement on reciprocal fishing privileges in each other's fishing zones, and what further steps are necessary to secure a new agreement or, alternatively, what steps are necessary to protect Canada's fishing interests if the United States will not renew the agreement on equitable terms.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Comox-Alberni has given the Chair due notice of his intention to request leave to move a motion to adjourn the House in order to discuss the subject matter of reciprocal fishing rights and privileges in the Pacific between Canada and the United States. It should also be said that the background material appended to the hon. member's notice was found to be most useful. I will add also that the Chair appreciated the hon. member's co-operation in placing for the consideration of the Chair a motion in a proper form without argument and supporting material in the motion itself.

● (1420)

There can be little doubt, of course, of the importance of the matter raised now by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni and by other hon. members during motions. The desirability of carrying on further negotiations with the United States is probably indisputable. However, as has been said often in the past, it is not the importance and

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urgency of the matter itself which the Chair ought to consider primarily, but the urgency of the debate.

In making a determination whether or not the matter should have urgent consideration under the provisions of Standing Order 26, the Chair must have regard to the probability of the matter being brought before the House within a reasonable time by other means. It does seem to the Chair that there are a number of steps available to the hon. member to bring on a discussion and consideration of the substance of the matter which he has requested be set down for debate. In my view, the proposed motion does not meet one of the basic requirements of the Standing Order and of our practice, and consequently it cannot be put to the House at this time.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

PENITENTIARIES

ESCAPES FROM ST. VINCENT DE PAUL—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON CIRCUMSTANCES—SECURITY PROVISIONS TO PREVENT FURTHER INCIDENTS—TYPE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I had a question for the Solicitor General but he seems to have escaped from the House today.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: Perhaps I might direct my question to the Prime Minister or to the Minister of Justice. I would ask whether either gentlemen can report any progress in respect of the capture of the five dangerous prisoners who escaped yesterday from St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary, and what security provisions are being undertaken at this time to avoid any further escapes from this penitentiary?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General would have very much liked to be here to meet hon. members but longstanding commitments in Victoria, including a meeting with the John Howard society, have kept him away. The matter of escapes and additional procedures is, of course, receiving very careful attention. At the same time, a decision has been taken and the commissioner will be authorizing an inquiry under Section 12 of the Penitentiary Act into the circumstances surrounding these escapes. The whole matter will be pursued with the vigour which I know the hon. Leader of the Opposition has come to expect of the Solicitor General.

Mr. Baldwin: That is what worries us.

An hon. Member: Give us an explanation.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Solicitor General does the best he can in view of the people he has to work with.

An hon. Member: That is a reflection on public servants.