

Oral Questions

Mr. Paproski: In view of the fact that my questions 1,480 to 1,511 have been on the order paper since February 5, will the Secretary of State for External Affairs advise whether one or two of my questions could be answered in a week or is there something to hide?

● (1450)

Mr. MacEachen: No, Mr. Speaker. The questions put down by the hon. member have been very much on my mind, but there has been a natural conflict between my desire for open government and my desire to curtail government expenditure; in this case, I believe that to answer all the hon. gentleman's questions fully would cost in excess of \$10,000. Maybe a more selective approach on the part of the hon. member would relieve me of concern in that area and possibly provide him with the information he is seeking. I am suggesting he could tell me exactly what he wants without going over the whole waterfront.

Mr. Paproski: They are very simple questions, Mr. Speaker. All I would like to know is what criteria were used in awarding the contract and who was the low and high bidder. There must be a full file containing this information and if there is not, the government is incompetent.

PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEE TO
INVESTIGATE CIDA

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Since problems concerning CIDA appear to be cropping up ever more frequently, would the hon. gentleman be willing to support the establishment of a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence to look into the affairs of CIDA?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): That matter was dealt with in the standing committee itself. I am ready to deal in the committee or in the House with any questions relating to CIDA, though I hope they are based on sounder information than that which was put about with respect to the Cuban loan.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CRIMINAL CODE

POSSIBLE AMENDMENT TO PREVENT THOSE UNABLE TO PAY
FINES FROM GOING TO JAIL

Mr. Stuart Leggett (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. In view of the fact that a high percentage of those in our prisons are native Indians, many of whom are there simply because of their failure to pay fines, and since the hon. gentleman is bringing in changes to the Criminal Code, would he advise us whether among those proposed changes is a provision whereby those who do not have the money to pay fines will not be jailed because of their impecuniosity?

[Mr. MacEachen.]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): A proposal to make this particular change is not included in the amendments which are anticipated in the very near future. However, the whole subject is one which is receiving a good deal of consideration both within the government and within the law reform commission. I would anticipate some solution in the not too distant future.

Mr. Leggett: Would the minister consult with his counterpart in British Columbia, where legislation has been in place for some time under the summary conviction act, with regard to the success of that legislation in reducing the number of Indians held in prison?

Mr. Lang: I am consulting very widely within a variety of jurisdictions, including certain other countries of the Commonwealth where interesting experiments are going on.

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TRANSPORT

SUGGESTED RECONSIDERATION OF DEPLOYMENT OF
LIFEBOAT STATIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND—REQUEST FOR TWO
STATIONS IN WESTERN PART OF PROVINCE

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is intended for the Minister of Transport—it follows the announcement of the creation of four additional lifeboat stations in the maritimes. A look at the map will reveal a very wide gap in the spacing of these stations, indicating a lack of appreciation of the factors governing the spacing of the lifeboat bases, particularly in western Newfoundland. Would the minister reconsider the deployment of these bases and see that at least two are located in the western part of Newfoundland?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): I have seen the map and it is true there is a gap. We are now reviewing our rescue policy and this will probably be one of the matters we shall look into.

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NATIONAL PARKS

WOOD BUFFALO—POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING OTHER LAND
TO OFFSET PORTION REMOVED TO SATISFY NATIVE CLAIMS

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister responsible for Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It concerns the removal of 42,000 acres from Wood Buffalo National Park in order to satisfy native claims under Treaty No. 8. Has the minister made any provision for obtaining other land suitable for national park purposes to offset this removal? Further, what is the policy of Parks Canada regarding the removal of land from national park status?

Mr. Speaker: The first part of the question deserves an answer but the second should not properly be asked during the question period.