

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: The motion proposed by the hon. member requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimity. I regret, therefore, to advise the hon. member that the motion cannot be put at this time.

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• (1440)

RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE FINANCING BILL

ESTABLISHMENT OF CORPORATION, RECOGNITION OF SPECIALIZED MORTGAGE INVESTMENT COMPANIES UNDER LOAN COMPANIES ACT AND TAX TREATMENT

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-135, to provide additional financing mechanisms and institutions for the residential mortgage market in Canada.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VIET NAM—CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT—PARTICIPATION BY CANADA IN SUPERVISORY COMMISSION

On the order: Government Notices of Motions:

This House welcomes the conclusion of the agreements on ending the war and restoring peace in Viet Nam and notes the provision for an International Commission of Control and Supervision as part of the cease-fire arrangements, in which Canada has agreed to participate for the initial period of 60 days as provided for in the note, dated January 27, 1973, from the Secretary of State for External Affairs to the four parties to the Viet Nam cease-fire.

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to section 2 of Standing Order 21 this notice of motion is transferred to and ordered for consideration under government orders later this day.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**THE MINISTRY**

NATURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST RULES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the Prime Minister back in his seat. I thought for a moment that he had rushed off to establish a line of credit with the new governor of the Bank of Canada. I should like to ask the Prime Minister an important question about any regulations that may be laid down within the government in regard to conflict of interest as far as members of the government are con-

[Miss MacDonald (Kingston and The Islands).]

cerned. In particular, are there any rules laid down and in force with regard to the ownership of property by ministers, and are there any regulations or rules regarding disclosure or the imposition of what is ordinarily called a blind trust?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think I can say that there are no regulations or legally binding rules. I go on to say that I, in conjunction with my colleagues in cabinet, have applied some rules such as those the hon. gentleman has referred to. I would willingly at some point discuss them at greater length if the House so desires. I would merely remind the Leader of the Opposition that the Speech from the Throne indicated a desire to bring this whole matter before parliament, and I would prefer to do this at a time when we might look not only at rules relating to ministers but for members of parliament and, indeed, members of the civil service. It is this total package that I would like to see discussed in parliament. Some of this may entail legislation, particularly changes in the act affecting the Senate and House of Commons. Other facets of the matter would probably be dealt with more in the form of a statement of policy by the government.

Mr. Stanfield: Would the Prime Minister indicate at this time whether these informal practices that are followed require disclosure of property owned by ministers or require the establishment, in the alternative, of some kind of blind trust? Can the Prime Minister indicate to the House very succinctly what the situation is?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As succinctly as I can, I would say a blind trust is the vehicle recommended in cases when ministers are in a position where they be involved in market transactions in connection with securities. The disclosure of property has been requested by me of ministers essentially in cases where expropriation by the federal government is involved.

Mr. Stanfield: Are there any actual regulations or informal understandings or requirements regarding senior civil servants or senior officers and directors of Crown corporations?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in the sense of general directives conveyed to them by their ministers. But here again I would repeat what I said a moment ago, that it would be my desire to formalize them and make them the object of a policy statement which would be along the lines I have just indicated, and deal with the whole matter. To give an example, in the case of senior civil servants who are brought into the service and who have substantial securities, a blind trust arrangement is requested of them before their appointment is made.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the Prime Minister's reference to the desirability of covering this matter in a comprehensive way, I wonder whether he would take a look at Bill C-38 in my name and, if it is acceptable, he could take it over and bring it in?