

Oral Questions

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

PRESENTATION OF WHITE PAPER

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. There has been a lot of confusion about whether or not we are going to receive a White Paper on defence. Can we expect a White Paper on defence some time in the late winter or spring?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet decided upon a date for the White Paper. When I have done so, I will advise the hon. gentleman, and indeed all Members of the House.

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that no White Paper is forthcoming and we have been waiting almost a year for a White Paper, would the Minister be prepared to make a statement on any fundamental policy changes in DND, in lieu of a White Paper?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I can give that very helpful suggestion every consideration. In the meantime, we have not been waiting for a year; we have been waiting closer to 14 years.

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STATISTICS CANADA

APPOINTMENT OF CENSUS COMMISSIONERS

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Supply and Services. Earlier he said that only qualified and competent census commissioners were hired. In view of the fact that incompetent and unqualified Tory hacks and flacks were hired, will the Minister immediately instruct the dismissal of all those who failed to achieve 60 per cent on the test in order to qualify to be commissioners?

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, there are two tests. One is written and one is oral, and the examiner takes both tests into account. If I ordered the dismissal of all of those who failed one of the tests, a great number of the nominees from over there would fail.

REQUEST FOR DISMISSALS

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that this Minister does not care about the integrity of the census. Again, in order to maintain the integrity of the census that is about to be taken, will the Minister recognize that unqualified persons, mostly Conservatives, were hired, and will he immediately dismiss those individuals who did not pass the written test, the only test?

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that Statistics Canada has advised me that only people who are qualified to carry out their obligations under the census will be hired.

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ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

INCREASED PILOTAGE FEES

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. The Minister will be aware of a decision handed down regarding the increased pilotage fees. Will the Minister use his powers to overrule this decision and provide the pilotage authority with the necessary funds to operate?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is aware that, under the provisions of the ruling handed down, there is a period of time during which a decision can be appealed, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment until that time has expired.

EFFECT ON SURVIVAL OF SEAWAY

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Does the Minister not agree that any increase in any costs related to the marine industry on the Seaway will be detrimental to its survival?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, my response would be the same. I would be prepared to express an opinion, perhaps in another context, but I think in light of the responsibility that I have, I would want to refrain from making any suggestions at this time.

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FISHERIES

UNITED STATES DUTIES ON CANADIAN FISH EXPORTS

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Prime Minister will be meeting with the President of the United States on Monday of next week. I wonder if the Secretary of State for External Affairs could tell the House if the issue of countervailing duties on salt codfish and fresh fish going into the United States will be on that agenda.

● (1500)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that depends upon the developments in the United States regulatory procedures with which the Hon. Member will be well acquainted. I should take the opportunity to tell him that I raised that particular matter in very strong terms when I met with Secretary Shultz on Friday.