

Oral Questions

[Translation]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SAUDI ARABIA—INQUIRY WHETHER CONDOLENCES SENT ON DEATH OF KING FAISAL AND WHETHER CANADA REPRESENTED AT FUNERAL

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

In view of the tragic and deplorable events in Saudi Arabia, would the Secretary of State for External Affairs tell us whether the condolences of the Canadian population have been offered to King Khaled, and whether the Canadian government is officially represented at the funeral of this head of state?

[English]

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, His Excellency the Governor General, the Prime Minister and I sent messages to the new king, King Khaled. In those messages we expressed the shock and grief of the nation at the tragic death of the late king. He was a leader who exerted major influence in world affairs and, particularly, within the Arab world. The Canadian representative at the funeral ceremonies today is our ambassador, Mr. Michael Shenstone.

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[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS

CABLEVISION—DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN QUEBEC AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a question to the Minister of Communications.

Can the minister tell the House what is the state of the negotiation with the Quebec government as regards the control of cable distribution and whether the respective positions of the federal and the Quebec governments remain relentlessly opposed?

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, on the request of the Quebec government itself, it is not a bilateral, but a multilateral consultation between the federal Minister of Communications on the one hand, and on the other hand the ten provincial Ministers of Communications. It would be too long to explain in detail what point we have reached. Therefore, I shall try to be short and say that a letter is being sent today to the president of the Commission of the provincial Ministers of Communications, Mr. Rhodes, the Ontario Minister of Communications. The letter says that the federal Department of Communications is willing to call a conference on an agenda mentioned in the letter, and that the date which would be most suitable for us and which we hope would suit the provinces would be around the middle of May.

[Mr. Speaker.]

[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

REQUEST FOR CLEMENCY FOR DR. MORGANTALER—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Justice. Dr. Morgantaler was acquitted by a jury, but the Supreme Court of Canada has upheld the decision reversing the acquittal; three judges, three members of the highest judicial authority in Canada, including the Chief Justice held, however, that the conviction ought to have been quashed. In view of this will the minister look into the case and recommend to the cabinet that it should exercise powers conferred on it on grounds of clemency, as it is obvious that the offence was committed for humanitarian motives.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, there will be no such recommendation. I will, of course, as a matter of interest, examine the judgments of the court in this case. I am rather astonished by the hon. member's suggestion that, in some fashion, the minority of the court overrides the majority.

Mr. Brewin: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister not know that even though a majority of the court has convicted a person, it is the duty of the Governor in Council to consider whether clemency should be exercised. Why is the minister not ready to perform that duty?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the law requires that various powers conferred on the executive shall be exercised only in most exceptional circumstances, indeed, only if there is some indication of the failure of the legal process. In this case, on the contrary, the legal process was carefully pursued to the Supreme Court and, without doubt, with great care in the Supreme Court itself.

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TRANSPORT

SALE OF CHAPMAN TRANSPORT TO DIRECT WINTERS TRANSPORT—ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO GAIN MONOPOLY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and requires consideration. It has been reported that Chapman Transport Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Canadian National Railways, has been sold to Direct Winters Transport Ltd. of Toronto, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fuqua Industries Incorporated of Atlanta, Georgia. Can the minister advise the House if this sale met with his approval and did it receive the approval of the Governor in Council administering the Foreign Investment Review Act.

● (1520)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have no memory of that deal. I shall inquire. If