

Privilege

It is a known fact that in the case of Route Canada the officers of the company allocated union dues, income tax deductions and pension funds, utilizing them to keep the company going rather than keeping them in trust or paying the Government.

Would the Minister explain why the Crown would prosecute and fine a bankrupt company rather than going after the officers and directors of that corporation?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this question was discussed at length in the House last year. I believe the Hon. Member is aware of the fact that an investigation or an inquiry is being conducted pursuant to an order arising from the Bankruptcy Act, and I have always said, as I told the Transport Committee this morning, that it was better to wait for the findings before intervening in any way at all, bearing in mind that this company was sold in the normal way by Canadian National to Route Canada.

[*English*]

PLIGHT OF ROUTE CANADA WORKERS—REFERENCE TO
COMMITTEE REQUESTED

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my concern is with the workers. My supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Labour. Given the plight of the Route Canada workers and their loss of pensions and loss of benefits, would he be prepared to refer this matter of the plight of the workers to one of our standing committees of either Justice, Transport or Labour, Employment and Immigration?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Hon. Member for Moncton that the Department of Labour has been very active in this case to protect the rights of workers, and after a number of presentations, we managed to get severance pay and annual leave for these workers, which represents an amount of over \$2 million, and we are still monitoring this case very closely to ensure that the rights of workers are respected to the extent that the financial resources are available.

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

VESSEL REPLACEMENT REGULATIONS

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. As the Minister knows, the new vessel replacement regulations for Atlantic groundfish vessels have created concerns and confusion among many fishermen and boat builders in Nova Scotia.

In light of the Minister's meeting yesterday with representatives of the Inshore Fisheries Concerned Citizens Alliance, can the Minister clearly state how the policy affects fishermen wishing to replace their vessels, and whether in fact fishermen are required to replace their vessels with ones of a smaller size?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for South Shore for the dedication he has given to the fishermen and boat builders of his area, not only in this respect but in many related matters.

As a consequence of some two years of discussion with the industry and Atlantic provinces, we have decided to essentially put the lid on the overbuilding of the inshore vessels of his area. I can undertake, and I did so with the members of the Alliance group which the Member brought to see me last evening, that vessels which presently exist will be replaced on a cubic metre for cubic metre basis, or a volume for volume basis, provided the owners of those vessels can prove that those vessels were of a particular size, dimension and volume. We therefore ask the fishermen to co-operate in this respect.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Papineau on a question of privilege.

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[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

MR. OUELLET—WORDS OF THE HON. CHARLES JAMES MAYER

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, during oral Question Period, the Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oil Seeds) (Mr. Mayer) accused me of having called a judge before, and I am sure the Hon. Minister is anxious to correct this unfounded accusation,