

year the period of time it takes a first class constable to reach maximum pay.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Johnston: There were overtime provisions. In all, and if hon. members will hear me out, since the question has been asked, it was considered to be a very generous package.

As it turns out, a number of members of the force felt they were personally prejudiced by the failure of Treasury Board to make this provision commence on January 1, 1981. This was for a number of reasons—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

AID TO CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. At a subcommittee meeting of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence last night, the minister indicated that Canada would be willing to take part in a joint U.S.-Mexican economic assistance program to help Caribbean nations. Can the minister say whether details of such assistance have been drawn up by his officials, toward that end?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, Canada has a full and, I believe, effective development program for the Caribbean area. We would certainly be prepared to share objectives with other countries that have the same ends in mind.

We have had no advance notice of the proposal which was made yesterday by the United States and apparently agreed to by Mexico, but we have an open mind on it. The Prime Minister has agreed in principle to meet at some time with the President of Mexico and the President of the United States. This is a matter which could be on the agenda and on which policy could be developed, both before and after.

At the moment, there are no further details nor have we given our assent to the proposal. As far as we know, there is really no exact proposal.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

RETROACTIVITY OF PAY INCREASES

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the President of the Treasury Board. It is a brief question which will permit him a brief answer. Can the President of the Treasury Board

Oral Questions

tell us whether the government will make the RCMP pay increase effective January 1, 1981?

Mr. Lawrence: A simple yes or no will do.

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I have met and I am meeting with my colleague, the Solicitor General, to discuss this problem. There are some misunderstandings, as I indicated in an earlier answer. I want to ensure that members of the force are not prejudiced, but I will obviously have to take the matter before my colleagues in Treasury Board, who arrived at the decision collectively, to grant the RCMP an increase as of April 1, 1981.

REQUEST FOR EARLY DECISION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, is the minister in a position to give a firm undertaking since a promise was made last week by his colleague that the matter would be studied? He is promising to study it again. Will the President of the Treasury Board tell us whether the government will make a final decision, by which it will abide, this week?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Yes, Madam Speaker, the government will make a firm decision on this issue this week.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

AID TO CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES—QUERY CONCERNING CUBA

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is a supplementary one and it is addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It concerns the proposals that have been discussed in the last two days by the President of the United States and the President of Mexico.

I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs, although he has not been involved in the discussions, whether or not there have been any discussions with any other members of the government or any officials within his department, with Mr. Tom Enders, former U.S. ambassador to Canada, about this matter? Could he also advise whether such discussions also included any kind of an aid program to Cuba?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, to the best of my knowledge there have been no discussions of any kind at any level with the U.S. government or its officials concerning this subject. I might say that, as of some years ago, we cut off our aid program to Cuba entirely and more recently even in indirect forms through NGOs, and we have no intention of reinstating them to Cuba.