

*Oral Questions*

MR. REID—DATE OF DISCUSSION WITH DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL CONCERNING TAX CHANGE ON BOATS REFERRED TO IN LETTER OF DECEMBER 19

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I raised that question because, in the letter the parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River, wrote on December 19, 1974, appears this paragraph:

I quite agree with you that the provision ought to have applied to snowmachines. I have spoken to the Department of Finance officials as well as the minister, and I understand they are likely to relieve the excise tax against boats, although not on motors . . .

That letter was addressed to Mr. Garth N. Nelson, president of Nelson's Leisureland. I ask the parliamentary secretary these questions: when did you have this discussion, and what was said in that discussion which led you to write that letter and make that clear prediction?

**Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I wrote the letter on December 19. That is the date on the letter. It was the result of fairly intensive work I had done in a short time, and I made a judgment as to what I thought would happen. My constituent had come to me and asked me what I thought was going to happen. I gave him the benefit of my opinion. It was strictly my opinion. He did not, incidentally, believe me.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Reid:** He did not believe me. I think I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that I had spoken to the minister in the House, to tell him how unfair I thought this tax was on the small boat manufacturers of my constituency and on the retailers and marine operators in my county, and I did so in company with a large number of hon. members from both sides of the House.

It seems to me, if any constituent asks me to give my impression of what is likely to happen in the House of Commons, that I am not doing my duty as a member of parliament if I deny him the benefit of that opinion.

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**REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION****GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ASSIST SPRINGHILL**

**Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. Can the minister provide the House with information about his activities relating to the disastrous fire which struck Springhill; what actions will he take, or what will his department do, in co-operation with other departments, to assist in the revitalizing of the business community of Springhill? May I thank the minister for the aggressive role he has taken in helping the people of the stricken community.

**Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to answer with as much detail as I can within the limits of the question period, and follow up with a more detailed answer later.

[Mr. Reid.]

Reference has already been made to consultations with the Solicitor General, with a possible view to obtaining a small and medium security addition or part of the penitentiary service for the area. The Minister of Manpower and Immigration and I have discussed the early start of local initiative programs, ahead of normal starting dates, so that people can be employed immediately. Last night I met Mr. Kent of Devco, not in any official capacity, but because of his knowledge of these matters. The minerals exploration agreement which we have with Nova Scotia permits sums to be assigned, to determine whether new mining ventures can be undertaken in communities like Springhill. In addition, I have one incentive case before me at present, of which I think the hon. member is aware. I will ask its consideration to be speeded. I have been waiting for word from the government of Nova Scotia following their cabinet meeting on Tuesday, to see what specific requests, if any, they will make, and I will keep the hon. member advised.

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**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

MR. REID—REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF LETTER OF DECEMBER 19 CONCERNING TAX CHANGES ON BOATS

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the President of the Privy Council and, through him, to the parliamentary secretary. What did the parliamentary secretary mean by these words in the letter which he wrote on December 19 to Mr. Garth N. Nelson, one of his constituents:

I have spoken to the Department of Finance officials as well as the minister—

What did he mean? Did he mean that he spoke for a deputation, in parliament? Does he mean something like that, or does he mean that he interviewed officials and the minister on this subject?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. With due respect, it seems to me that the parliamentary secretary just answered a similar question asked by the hon. member for Calgary North.

MR. REID—SUGGESTED CONSULTATION ON TERMS OF REFERENCE OF QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE TO STANDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, to the President of the Privy Council. As the parliamentary secretary suggested, very properly, that in certain circumstances the general terms of this matter ought to be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, may I ask the President of the Privy Council, because of the importance of the terms of reference, to consult others on this side of the House as to the proper terms of reference?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, as I understand the question raised by my parliamentary secretary, he was referring to an article in the *Montreal Gazette*, which made certain allegations, namely, that my parliamentary secretary had access to budget secrets before the budget was brought down. He