

interests as a maritime province would be sold out by the Government in order to get this agreement? Is that not the concern Mr. Peckford expressed? Is that not the concern which the Government deliberately ignored?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, for the third time the Hon. Member is peddling a falsehood.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: That is close.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: I think the Hon. Minister has indicated that he is not in agreement with what the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party said. One might say that he is getting very close to suggesting that the Hon. Leader of the NDP is a peddler in falsehood, but I think the intention was that the Minister did not agree with the suggestion being made. However, it is an indication of the difficulty in which it puts the Chair and I am sure the Hon. Minister would want to indicate to the House that he did not intend that the Leader of the New Democratic Party was intentionally misleading the House.

An Hon. Member: Take the high road, Joe.

Mr. Broadbent: Be a statesman, Joe.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party was exercising a terminological inexactitude.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nunziata: You are no longer a wimp, Joe. You are in the big leagues now.

An Hon. Member: Joe for Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I know Hon. Members are waiting in expectation for the next exchange.

* * *

[Translation]

THE CABINET

FUTURE OF MINISTER OF STATE—REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when I was asking the Prime Minister whether he had made a decision with respect to his Minister of State, the Hon. Member for Joliette, I believe it would not be exaggerating to say that the Prime Minister lost his temper when he said that I was indulging in calumny and character assassination.

Oral Questions

Today, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Considering reports that the Minister of State handed in his resignation to the Prime Minister, doesn't the Deputy Prime Minister feel the Canadian public has a right to expect the Government to react quickly in this respect and inform the House as soon as possible whether the Minister will or will not remain in Cabinet?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member, and I am sure other Hon. Members, would agree that whatever discussions, if any, that may be taking place between the Prime Minister and the Minister of State are a matter between them. The Prime Minister clearly has prerogative in this particular area. If any decisions are to be taken, I am sure they will be taken in due course.

REQUEST FOR DECISION BY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, what is troubling is that the Minister of State is also reported as saying that there will be no decision in his case until the end of the month when he will meet again with the Prime Minister. Does the Deputy Prime Minister not think that it is about time that his Prime Minister showed some leadership instead of indecisiveness in this case, and that he help to clear the air quickly and let Canadians know whether or not the Minister will stay in cabinet?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Hon. Member, I think it is about time that he stopped relying on newspaper reports as his research facility. It is my understanding that again we have had a series of allegations levelled at the Minister of State which have been refuted. As a matter of fact, it is my understanding that reporters from the Canadian Press have phoned his office this morning and apologized for the fact that some of the statements are inaccurate and could not be confirmed.

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and also refers to the Hon. Member for Joliette. There are some questions surrounding the handling of this issue. Once certain allegations regarding the Minister of State for Transport were brought to the Prime Minister's attention he ordered an immediate investigation by the RCMP and took action by asking for his resignation. We all agree that that was the appropriate step to take. When the matter regarding the \$5,000-a-plate dinner was brought to the Prime Minister's attention he also ordered an RCMP investigation, yet did not ask for the Minister's resignation. Will the Deputy Prime Minister explain the difference in the two cases? Why did he act with haste in asking for the resignation of the Minister in one case but did not and still does not in the other case?