

Oral Questions

always respected the process. Certainly we will not do anything that would be inimical to the judicial process.

I will have a fuller answer for him in a few days.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question. We are not going to give up.

The court ruling also stated that the plan to end ferry service between the island and the mainland is unconstitutional. Yet Bill C-110, the enabling legislation which does just that, is currently being rushed through the legislative process. This is not only inappropriate but unconstitutional. Will the minister withdraw Bill C-110 immediately?

• (1430)

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, this again is part of the process we will have to look at. My colleague knows that in the agreement signed between the federal government, by myself, and the Government of Prince Edward Island certain assurances were given by that government that whatever steps deemed to be necessary would be taken in order to cure any constitutional problems.

Bill C-110 is something that has been considered in committee. It may well be that it is not project specific legislation but legislation that might be useful in the future for any project.

However, he can be sure we are not going to do anything rash or precipitous.

* * *

RUSSIA

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday the Prime Minister, along with other heads of government, reaffirmed his commitment to the process of democracy and market reform taking place in Russia. Given the very serious and deteriorating situation in that country, I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he could tell us if any new specific plan of action or of assistance is being developed by Canada along with the other western countries prior to the

meetings of President Yeltsin and President Clinton in Vancouver, so that the west and Canada can show their good faith to the Russian people, that we very much care about their anxious desire for reform.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for a very important question.

Late last week I was in touch with Chancellor Kohl in a lengthy telephone conversation in regard to what we might do together with President Clinton and other leaders around the world. I share my hon. friend's concern about the absolute necessity to maintain the democratic institutions that are growing in Russia and the market reforms, without which there can be no successful future for these institutions of democracy itself in Russia.

We have strongly supported President Yeltsin's initiatives. We have conveyed our support for him, his initiatives, and the process at this important juncture in Russian history.

It is my expectation, although one does not know, that the Vancouver summit will proceed as scheduled. Canada will be ready to proceed with new and we think constructive and creative approaches which will help the Russian people and the Russian President in his endeavours and his important initiatives to build a democratic, market-driven society in Russia.

I thank my hon. friend for the support I know he will give to the Government of Canada as we work with our colleagues in the G-7 and elsewhere to help bring this about.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, last spring when President Yeltsin visited this city the Prime Minister and the government made a number of commitments to provide encouragement and support for grain shipments, nuclear safety projects, humanitarian assistance and a special scholarship fund.

As things stand now, grain shipments to Russia have been suspended for the last six or seven months. The announced \$30 million nuclear safety program and the \$10 million Yeltsin democracy fellowship have not yet been implemented. Our humanitarian assistance is on the decline.

I ask a very serious question of the Prime Minister. How can we expect to believe the Prime Minister when the commitments made almost a year ago have not yet