

Oral Questions

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Of course, Mr. Speaker, we will follow the law. We have not yet received a written decision. When we do, we will base our appeal on that decision. At the moment, of course, the law prevails and we will not be able to enforce any of those regulations in the Province of Ontario.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1420)

APPLICATION OF LAW

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the citizens of Canada I ask this question of the Prime Minister. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who represents a tiny group of fanatics, the dinosaurs of this nation, says that in Ontario we are free to use imperial and metric. What does the Prime Minister say is the case as it applies to all of Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on fanatics, but I do know that the dinosaurs are those who refuse to see metric is world-wide in its scope and that Canada has to live in the world if it wants to trade in the world. I also know that the Hon. Member's Party voted in support of the metric system. The metric system was first brought in by Tory Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. So much for the dinosaurs.

I understand that the judgment just came out.

Some Hon. Members: It is just a judgment. It is just a judge.

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, it is just a judgment until all appeals have been exhausted, or until a decision has been made not to go to appeal.

An Hon. Member: Walk on water, Pierre.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I appeal to the Leader of the Opposition and remind him once again that he has talked repeatedly about civility in the House of Commons. I wish he would talk to his own caucus rather than talking to the press.

ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS—APPLICATION OF CHARTER OF RIGHTS

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister a very important question with respect to the Charter of Rights and Judge Ross's very blistering attack on government activities in terms of regulations which infringe on the rights of individual citizens of this country. Will the Prime Minister do the just thing in the spirit of the Charter of Rights, and give direction that, until this matter is resolved, regulations which allow the metric enforcement squad to go in and shut down the livelihood and operations of service station operators in Canada are not to be enforced?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should remember that the Charter of Rights, which is binding upon all Canadians, is the work of this Government. His Party fought the Charter of Rights for a year, saying that it should only be done after patriation of the Constitution, which really meant it never would have been done because we know the difficulty there was, even before patriation, to get agreement from the Provinces.

Mr. Speaker, there is a Charter of Rights to protect the citizens. The courts are there to enforce the Charter of Rights. As the Minister said, we want to live with the laws and the Charter as they are willed by this Parliament. Let the process go through the courts; then the Government will decide if the law is an infringement of the Charter or not. If the courts decide that the regulations are an infringement of the Charter they will be changed, obviously.

GOVERNMENT POLICY INQUIRY

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Judge Ross stated in his judgment that this Government regards the Charter of Rights only as a mere declaration. If the Prime Minister has any interest, aside from words and proclamations and declarations, will he take some active steps in terms of policy to prevent the Gestapo-like tactics such as those going on with respect to the metric enforcers and in the Department of National Revenue, to ensure that the spirit of the Charter of Rights, with respect to the rights of individuals vis-à-vis the Government, will be observed?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I suspect the Hon. Member is not quoting the judge correctly. If the judge said that this Government is considering the Charter only a declaration, then the judge does not know what he is talking about. I suspect that he is being misquoted.

Mr. Crosbie: Have you read the judgment?

Mr. Trudeau: I suspect he has been misquoted by the Hon. Member.

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FISHERIES

FEES CHARGED TO BRITISH COLUMBIA GILLNET FISHERMEN

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. At the meeting with gillnet fishermen at Steveston on Monday, Mr. Parkinson, head of the Small Craft Harbours Branch, made only two minuscule cuts in the exorbitant charges being levied on gillnetters, charges which will ruin the majority of them. Will the Minister authorize the branch to hold up the proposed rates for at least a year while consultations take place? Will he, or his deputy, attend the meeting of gillnetters to be held in New Westminster this Friday, and hear the concerns of the gillnet fishermen directly from them?