

Oral Questions

I want to reassure the Hon. Member that this is clearly a new departure that has been taken. The Solicitor General and his departmental officials are paying very close attention to the operation of the law.

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THE ADMINISTRATION

RESIGNATION OF FORMER DEFENCE MINISTER

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I am all tied up here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: We've known that for years.

Mr. Tobin: Wave the hounds down, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In addressing the question I am reminded of the old mother saying: "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive!"

We just saw the Secretary of State for External Affairs shaking his head, "no", when he heard himself being quoted by my colleague with respect to his comments as to the initiation of the resignation of the Minister of National Defence. We just heard the Deputy Prime Minister contradict the statement the Prime Minister made yesterday.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Tobin: I am coming to the question, gentlemen. I advise the Secretary of State for External Affairs to check *Hansard* of the days he was questioned, February 14 and 15. Was the Minister indicating to the House that the Minister of National Defence had submitted his own resignation, or is he telling us now that he agrees with what the Prime Minister said yesterday, that in fact the resignation was solicited?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I was intending to say to the House on those dates what I said to the House on those dates. That is entirely consistent with what the Prime Minister of Canada has said.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, you would need a road-map to follow the logic that is being expressed opposite. You would have to do mental gymnastics to try to stay in touch with the convoluted answers we are getting. We are not sure what the Minister intended to say. I do not think he is sure any more.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. Wednesday becomes Friday this week. A supplementary question, please.

MINISTER'S REPLIES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): My question to the Minister of External Affairs could not be any clearer. Two days following the resignation of the Minister of National Defence, on February 14 and 15, in response to specific questions by the Member for Hamilton Mountain, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that the Minister had resigned of his own volition, that he jumped rather than being pushed. I am now asking whether the Secretary of State agrees with the Prime Minister that he was pushed. More importantly, as *The Globe and Mail* says—

An Hon. Member: Tear it up.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. I think we have had the question put.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is my regretful conclusion that the Hon. Member is beyond help.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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INDUSTRY

TAKEOVER OF WORTHINGTON CANADA BY DRESSER INDUSTRIES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. Earlier this year the Cabinet approved the takeover of Worthington Canada in Brantford by the huge U.S. multinational, Dresser Industries of Dallas, Texas. Would the Minister tell the House what undertakings were received from Dresser Industries to expand jobs in Brantford as a result of this takeover?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member is well aware, it is not customary to reflect on, or certainly to reveal, what undertakings may have been given at the time of a clearance or other approval such as he has referred to.

DRESSER INDUSTRIES' LAY-OFF POLICY

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of the corporate policy of Dresser as expressed by its chairman, John James, in 1982, at which time he said:

Since I came here as chairman we've made an effort to keep our U.S. plants fully loaded, while keeping any necessary lay-offs primarily in foreign plants.

Did the Minister receive undertakings from Dresser that it would not apply this philosophy to the Worthington plant in Brantford? Did he get assurances that the jobs in the plant in Brantford would be protected?