

Vacancy

Mr. Speaker: I want to advise that there will be a single question from the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, and a single question from the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

COMPOSITION OF IRAN-IRAQ PEACEKEEPING CONTINGENT

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Defence I would like to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. I am sure all Canadians are praying for the safety of the 500 person contingent that is being sent over on the peacekeeping mission.

I would like to ask the Government, why Canada, without any advice or suggestion from the United Nations, has unilaterally decided to send a contingent which excludes women, excludes people of Jewish and Arabic origin, and which is contrary to the Canadian Human Rights code.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can answer that question as Acting Minister of Defence and indicate that I am not able to provide an answer to the question of the Hon. Member at this time. I will have to seek to establish whether those are the facts of the situation.

I am sure that the Hon. Member will appreciate that this is a dangerous situation into which Canadian troops are being sent. There is a great deal of evident danger that might be more perilous for certain persons than for others, and that may well be part of the consideration in taking this into account.

Nevertheless, I will determine the facts and make sure the Hon. Member receives a complete answer.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

NORTHERN HIGHWAY EXPENDITURES

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. A few days ago his boss was in his riding of Manicouagan, Québec, and he announced that some \$288 million was being spent in that riding. In addition, some \$40 to \$50 million was committed during the Lac-Saint-Jean by-election to build a road from Lac-Saint-Jean to Baie James.

In the name of regional fairness, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister why the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has cut back on northern highway spending by \$25 million in the last three years, and why it has cut back spending on the Alaska Highway by some \$13 million between 1983 and 1987. In the name of regional fairness, why is that happening?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I can only draw from the criticism of the New Democratic Party the fact that it is against the clean up of the St. Lawrence River, because \$110 million of the funds the Hon. Member has referred to is included in that.

If the position of members of the New Democratic Party is that we should not support the clean up of the St. Lawrence River, let them so state. If it is also the position of the members of the New Democratic Party that we should not be extending regional development programs in areas of high unemployment, let them so state. This is precisely what is being done.

We are attacking the problems of high unemployment in certain areas of the country where the rate of unemployment is unduly high. We are attacking pollution. This Government has one of the best environmental records in the history of any Government in Canada. If Hon. Members are not supporting that, let them so state.

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VACANCY

EGMONT—GEORGE HENDERSON, BY RESIGNATION

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received a communication notifying me that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely, George R. Henderson, Esquire, Member for the electoral district of Egmont, by resignation. Accordingly, I have addressed my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a new writ of election to the said electoral district.

The Hon. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on a question of privilege.

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PRIVILEGE

PRESS RELEASE OF MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND
NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the question of privilege which was initiated on Friday in my absence by the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton). The Hon. Member for Skeena suggested that a press release put out by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was not accurate. In reading that press release it could lead one to believe that legislation had already been passed.

I would like to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, the discussions that had taken place in the standing committee in