

House to proceed before 2.15. I have indicated that it should be done at three o'clock. The introduction of the motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

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### RESOURCES

#### PROPOSED INQUIRY INTO MINING SECTOR—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to ask the unanimous consent of the House to deal with a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. In view of the fact that there have recently been close to 4,000 lay-offs in the mining sector and mining officials are predicting there may be as many as another 3,000 over the next six months, and in view of the fact that many of these lay-offs are attributable to poor planning in the mining sector, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes):

That this House call on the government to immediately establish a parliamentary commission of inquiry into the mining sector of the economy with a view to development of an industrial strategy to ensure that Canadians receive the maximum possible benefit from the exploitation of their resources.

**Mr. Speaker:** Such a motion can be presented for discussion only with unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

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### VACANCY

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. 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 Robert Stanbury, Esq., the member for the electoral district of York-Scarborough, by resignation. Accordingly, I have addressed my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a new writ of election for the said electoral district.

### Oral Questions

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

#### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

##### ALLEGED ILLEGAL INTERCEPTION OF MAIL—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, in the inexcusable absence of the Prime Minister—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:**—and in face of two major questions concerning the unity and the competence of his cabinet, I should like to direct a question either to the Postmaster General or to the Acting Prime Minister, whoever that is today. My question is this: Have security officials been intercepting, opening, inspecting or copying mail of private Canadian citizens in any circumstances other than undeliverable mail or customs inquiries?

**Hon. John C. Munro (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to draw the attention of the House to a letter the Prime Minister wrote to the Leader of the Opposition this morning stating in some considerable detail the justifiable reasons for his absence. I quote:

The Prime Minister has asked me to inform you that he feels that he must proceed to the Maritimes to keep his previous commitments to hold important discussions with Premier Regan and Premier Hatfield.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** These are in line with meetings already arranged by the Prime Minister with Premiers Lougheed and Bennett in western Canada some time ago to discuss the very questions that members of the opposition claim are of such importance to Canada, namely the questions of the economy and national unity.

● (1417)

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, I continue to be amazed by the tactics used by this government to avoid answering questions. This House and the country know that the Prime Minister had Monday in the Bahamas and is on a Jetstar today—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I should like to ask hon. members on both sides of the House to permit, if possible, those putting questions and those answering, some quiet in which we can hear them.

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, in his defence of the indefensible the minister debated—

**Some hon. Members:** Question, question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, might I ask the Acting Prime Minister for an answer to my question?