

made the allegation that the \$6.50 per barrel that was decided upon was apparently the result of making the premier of Saskatchewan putty in the hands of the premier of Alberta. I wanted to ask the hon. member for York South a question but he knew what the question was and therefore he refused to do the usual thing, accept it. Can the Prime Minister clarify the situation with respect to the premier of Saskatchewan and tell us whether or not he agreed wholeheartedly to the \$6.50? Otherwise, we will hear about it politically from the hon. member for York South.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman is familiar with the code of honour that prevails during these meetings, the essence of which is that each member should be allowed to speak for himself and give his point of view, which of course I did and which I understand the premier of Saskatchewan has done publicly in the press, and which certainly is a contradiction of what the leader of the NDP said.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

ALLEGED INVESTIGATION BY ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE INTO ACTIVITIES OF CERTAIN NEWSPAPER REPORTERS—REQUEST FOR PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of either the Solicitor General or the Prime Minister, and I gave notice of it this morning. My question arises out of an investigation by the RCMP of alleged subversive activity by several newspaper writers or reporters, namely, Mr. Bob Parkins, Mr. Bill Boei, Mr. Bob Bragg and Mr. Warren Caragata, some of them employed by the *Calgary Herald*. Would the Prime Minister or the Solicitor General make a statement and also assure us that freedom of speech and civil rights will be protected in the case of these newspaper reporters?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, there has been a long tradition in the House, and in consideration of the public interest, that we never reply in the affirmative or the negative to a question whether a police investigation is under way.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: May I put this question to the Solicitor General. I do not think there is any question that an investigation has taken place, from the information I have and which the minister has, but in light of the situation will he assure the House that the civil rights of these reporters and freedom of the press in this country will be protected from this kind of investigation?

Mr. Allmand: This government and this party have always supported freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

Mr. Allmand: I might say that one of the reporters who was mentioned in the article in the *Calgary Herald* had not even heard of any investigation against him until he read about it in the *Calgary Herald*.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: I would think, in light of the number of articles that have appeared and the amount of information that is now available on this subject, that the minister would want to assure the House and the country that the civil rights of these reporters will be protected other than by the kind of investigation which the minister knows is going on.

Mr. Allmand: I can give that assurance to the extent of my responsibility. I might say that at the federal level we do what we can to protect the civil rights of all persons, but there is a certain responsibility at the provincial level as well.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Allmand: We have no intention of interfering with the civil rights of any individuals, whether they be reporters or otherwise.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FISHERIES

LOBSTER—EFFECT OF OFFSHORE FISHING ON INSHORE FISHERMEN OF NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Fisheries, who was here a moment ago. Perhaps I can put the question anyway and receive a response from someone else.

With respect to the decision made in 1970 by the department to encourage the development of two large companies in offshore lobster fishing, which had very injurious effects upon inshore lobster fishermen in Nova Scotia, and the commitment at that time by the Minister of Fisheries and, I understand, by the Prime Minister—that may not be accurate but if it is the Prime Minister might be able to reply—to examine and study the effects of this new mechanism and new procedure in fishing for lobster on inshore fishermen, was a study undertaken and completed by the end of 1971, as it was supposed to have been and, if so, what were the results of that study and what has been done to preserve the position of inshore fishermen?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, speaking in the name of the Minister of Fisheries, I cannot give details on whether or not there will be an investigation, but I will see to it that the hon. member gets an answer as soon as possible.