

Oral Questions

the Department of Justice according to a tariff set up by the Department of Justice when their services are needed.

Mr. Matte: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Are we to understand from the reply the minister has just made that he will not go before the Supreme Court to appeal the decision rendered by Justice Hugessen in connection with the case which is now pending before the Keable Commission, and to what extent is the current administration not willing to go to demonstrate the relevancy of federalism, as well as its sole preoccupation with truth and justice by working in closer co-operation with the Keable Commission?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that by setting up an inquiry at the federal level, we have clearly demonstrated to the Canadian people our intention to go to the bottom of the sometimes far-out allegations which have been made, like those the hon. member himself made on TV, when he accused the RCMP of having murdered a former—

An hon. Member: A friend of his!

Mr. Fox:—resident of the province of Quebec, a certain Mr. Viger, when all available evidence bears witness to the fact that Mr. Viger fell off a tractor on his farm and died from heat exposure. If the hon. member wants to talk of justice, Mr. Speaker, he should be honest enough to substantiate his rumours before the inquiries which have been set up or refer them to the attorney general of the province of Quebec and indicate who his informants are. Should he fail to do so, we would have to come to the conclusion that his rumours are the result of a highly irresponsible mind.

Mr. Matte: Mr. Speaker, I would not raise a question of privilege since the moment is not appropriate, but I—

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the hon. member at three o'clock on a question of privilege.

● (1432)

[*English*]

McDONALD COMMISSION—REASON FOR OPPOSITION TO APPLICATION OF LEADER OF OPPOSITION TO BE REPRESENTED

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the same minister. With regard to the application that was recently made by counsel on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition to the McDonald Commission, which was opposed by three counsellors, namely, counsel for the commission itself, counsel for the commissioner of the RCMP and counsel for the Solicitor General, did the counsel oppose that application on the instructions, be they direct or indirect, of the Solicitor General? In other words, did all three oppose these instructions, and if not, who opposed the application of the Leader of the Opposition and for what reasons?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): When the Leader of the Opposition decided to ask permission to have counsel sit in on commission hearings, the matter was brought to my attention by my counsel. My position is that the Government of

[Mr. Fox.]

Canada has full confidence in the commission of inquiry which was set up by the government of Canada to look into the matter concerning allegations against the RCMP. We have full faith that that commission will be able to get to the bottom of the matter. We believe that if it comes to the question of who should appear before that commission, it becomes quite clear at that point that all political parties would have as good a case as the Leader of the Opposition to be represented before that commission as well as innumerable groups throughout the country. It is our position that the commission has received a mandate from the government to go right to the heart of the matter. We have full faith in that commission, which apparently is not the case of the Leader of the Opposition.

McDONALD COMMISSION—SUBMISSION TO COUNSEL OF QUESTIONS NOT ANSWERED BY SOLICITOR GENERAL

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): I regret the Solicitor General refuses to answer whose counsel was instructed by him or by the government. He described the McDonald Commission as a place where sunshine is let in. It could be more accurately described right now as foggy hall. Numerous questions were put to the Solicitor General in the House and in the committee which he refused to answer on the basis that those questions would be more properly put before the McDonald Inquiry, and I do not think he will deny that. Has his counsel received the transcript of questions put both in the House and in the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, and will the Solicitor General make an undertaking to the House that those questions will be put at the appropriate time by his counsel at the McDonald Commission?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): It is quite apparent the hon. member does not understand the workings of the McDonald Commission. Perhaps if he left the House and sat in on some of the meetings of the commission he would understand that questions are being put to witnesses by the commission counsel. Perhaps he would also understand that the decision as to whether a political party should be represented before the commission was made by the commission itself.

So far as the specific questions which were put to me at the hearings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs are concerned, I would be delighted to forward a copy of the committee's proceedings to the counsel for the commission of inquiry.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR MAINTENANCE OF QUOTAS ON OCEANIC BEEF

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the fact that quotas on low grade Australian and New Zealand beef will run out at the end of this year and the continuing low returns to the Canadian livestock industry, can the minister assure the House