

Oral Questions

Committee of Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs for study, and to allow witnesses to appear and react to his budget so that its implications may be clearly understood and that its benefits may be clearly identified?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I thought that hon. members would much prefer to have the budget discussion held in the Committee of the Whole House. That provides members with an opportunity to raise the points they have in mind. For the last budget I did agree to have certain tax measures sent to the committee. In these circumstances I believe that the Committee of the Whole is preferable. However, I will keep the hon. member's suggestion in mind.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION**REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER MEET WITH LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

Mr. Peter Ittinuar (Nunatsiag): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. In light of an unprecedented move by the Northwest Territorial Legislative Assembly to travel en masse to Ottawa in protest against the absence of aboriginal rights in the November 5 accord, as well as other concerns, will the Prime Minister acknowledge the significance of that move by meeting with the Territorial Council before the end of this week?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Madam Speaker.

* * *

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**PROCEEDINGS IN MONTREAL COURT CASE**

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): My question is directed to the Prime Minister, if I may get his attention. It relates to the intervention by two lawyers in a court case in Montreal yesterday, allegedly on the instructions of the Government of Canada, in which they attempted to restrict testimony of two ex-RCMP security officials. Whom do lawyers Joseph Nuss and Michel Robert represent? What are their instructions? Why are they engaging in heated and vigorous arguments to restrict testimony in a criminal prosecution?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member has some knowledge of law and of court practice whereby he would know that it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the proceedings. As to who the people are and what their positions are, I will inquire, Madam Speaker.

NATURE OF PROCEEDINGS

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): My supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will appreciate that I was not talking about the substance of the argument, nor of the evidence. I was asking what the instructions were to the two lawyers. Of course the main testimony of yesterday related to evidence from prime ministerial aide of 14 years ago, with no foreign involvement, no cabinet order, and no prime ministerial directive; therefore, no cabinet secrecy was involved. I ask the Prime Minister again, and he should know, why is there this continuing attempt to gag a court from inquiring into the same circumstances as this Parliament has been gagged and a royal commission has been gagged?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, it seems to me that the substance of the question is evidence itself that the hon. member is engaging in the substance of the matter being discussed there. He is asking me why lawyers are pleading certain things in front of the court. Madam Speaker, if that is not intervening in the court, if that is not an intervention by a member of Parliament in a due process of law, I wonder what is.

* * *

THE BUDGET**EFFECT ON INCOME DERIVED FROM LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES**

Mr. Peter Lang (Kitchener): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. In the interest of furthering equity in the tax reform contained in the budget, would the minister consider restructuring the closure of the tax expenditure relating to tax of unrealized income from life insurance policies?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lang: Madam Speaker, over 80 per cent of these life insurance policies are held by individuals earning less than \$25,000 a year. The purpose of their purchasing these policies is to take financial responsibility in looking after their dependants. I wonder if the minister would consider refining his closure of this tax expenditure.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1500)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for supporting the budget measures last night. In view of that support I would be happy to consider any refinements that can be possible in these measures.