

Oral Questions

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what the hon. member means by being "brought in under the autopact" because, of course, it already is, for all practical purposes. There may be some distinctions that I do not understand from the question but I would be glad to consult with the hon. member on it.

Mr. Kempling: A supplementary question. Can the minister assure the House as well that although the automobile price parity is outside the autopact, the committee will carefully study this subject and determine whether it can be brought into the pact or whether separate letters of commitment can be secured from the manufacturers to assure price parity as soon as possible?

Mr. Jamieson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I shall be glad to take note of the hon. member's representations.

* * *

COMMUNICATIONS

POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFERRING RESPONSIBILITIES FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS TO COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications. Is the government giving consideration to the transfer of certain responsibilities currently exercised by the Department of the Secretary of State to the Department of Communications, such as responsibility for the CBC, which was being contemplated apparently at the time Pierre Juneau was appointed minister of communications?

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the distribution of responsibilities within the government rests with the Prime Minister.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, could I refer this question to the Prime Minister? I am not sure if he heard it. Is consideration still being given to transferring some responsibility which currently comes under the responsibility of the Secretary of State, such as the CBC, to the Department of Communications as was apparently intended at the time of Pierre Juneau's appointment?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to receive suggestions from the other side on the reorganization of the administration or portfolios but at the present time nothing is being contemplated.

DATE OF APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF RADIO-TELEVISION COMMISSION

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): A supplementary question. Can the Prime Minister tell the House why the CRTC is being required to drift without a permanent chairman since August 29 when Pierre Juneau was appointed minister of communications and when does the government intend to announce the appointment of a permanent chairman for the CRTC?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the intention has been to wait until the minister was appointed to proceed with that appointment. As the hon.

member knows, Mr. Juneau did not remain minister long enough to confirm that. I am sure that the new minister, in discussions with me, will be able to appoint a permanent chairman very soon.

* * *

● (1440)

INCOME TAX

REASON FOR EARLY MAILING OF FORMS

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. In view of the usual Christmas postal rush and the backlog of mail remaining from the recent Post Office shutdown which, until as recently as yesterday, included the hundreds of bags of mail stashed away on Parliament Hill, why did the Department of National Revenue find it necessary to send out millions of personal income tax forms, when they will not be needed for several weeks at least and some people probably do not care if they ever get them?

Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I want him to know how efficient the department has become. We want to send the material out as soon as we can, so that people can see how easy it is to fill out income tax forms.

* * *

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

POSSIBILITY OF MANDATORY SENTENCES FOR VIOLENT CRIMES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Since, because of his efforts, juggling and dealings with personnel of the committee, we are to have mandatory sentences for second or third breathalyzer offences, and as the former minister of justice said he did not favour mandatory sentences for crimes such as extortion with kidnapping, is it now the minister's policy to bring in mandatory sentences for crimes of violence like kidnapping with extortion, or any crime committed with the use of firearms.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, there are no minimum mandatory sentences for these offences. The minimum mandatory sentences for second offences of impaired driving have been in the Criminal Code for some years, and there is no change in that regard in Bill C-71.

Mr. Woolliams: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since section 247 of the Criminal Code deals with kidnapping and since the words "liable to imprisonment for life" mean in law that an offender may be imprisoned for one day or for life, I ask again, will the minister's new policy call for mandatory sentences in cases of violent crime, and will he implement this policy in the same way as he seeks to implement law and regulations with respect to the breathalyzer test?