

Employer-Employee Relations in the Public Service. That report contained 72 recommendations on which there has been no legislative action. When can we expect the official government response to the 72 recommendations in that report?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I must say I was not aware that today was the sixth anniversary. I hope to be able to report a great deal of progress in this area. The cabinet now has before it for consideration a number of recommendations respecting employer-employee relations in the public service. I would like to assure the hon. member for Vaudreuil that, in developing those proposals, we have relied very heavily on the very fine work done by the parliamentary joint committee and on the work done by Mr. Finkelman.

PUBLIC UTTERANCES BY PUBLIC SERVANTS

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question on the general question of the public service. When we had our exchange in the House the other day, the minister seemed quite sure about what his position and the position of the government ought to be with respect to public servants and public utterances by public servants. When he went outside the House, he was not quite so clear. He admitted to reporters that the situation of civil servants might not be that clear cut. He says one thing inside the House and something else outside the House. Given that situation, are the specifics of the kind of issues that are extant in the case of Neil Fraser also before the cabinet, because the law is unclear, and public servants are in danger of being pilloried as a result of the government's attitude to rules that are unclear and rules that are unevenly enforced within the public service?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I do not recall saying anything in the House that was incompatible with anything I said outside the House with respect to the Neil Fraser case. I certainly do not have the capacity to speak out of both sides of my mouth as the hon. member seems to do on occasion.

Mr. Clark: Stay on the high road, Don.

Mr. Johnston: This whole question is subject to the grievance procedure. I understand the employee in question is exercising his right in accordance with the grievance procedure. If I said outside the House that these cases are not black and white, they certainly are not. There are obviously grey areas in any kind of procedure. Dismissals, whether they be in the public service or the private sector, are subject to the same kind of considerations.

REPRESENTATIONS BY OTTAWA LIBERAL MEMBERS

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that in the grey area the government moved so precipitously in this important case. Has the President of the Treasury Board received representations with respect to this

case from the hon. member for Ottawa West, the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier, and the hon. member for Ottawa Centre? What views have they expressed to the President of the Treasury Board with respect to the case under discussion?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, whatever representations may or may not have been made to me as President of the Treasury Board have little to do with the case in question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: That settles that.

Mr. Johnston: As I explained in this House, and as I will again explain to the hon. member, the code of conduct with respect to each department is the responsibility of the deputy minister in that department. The decisions that are made with respect to discipline of the kind which took place in the Neil Fraser case is the responsibility of that deputy minister. The grievance procedure provides for an appeal to that deputy minister. As I said before, that is the procedure which is in place. It has always been satisfactory in the past. I gather it is proceeding in accordance with the established rules in the Department of National Revenue.

Mr. Neil Fraser will obviously have every opportunity to present his views and to exercise all the recourses available to him under the law. I would be happy to hear representations from him with regard to that. If he is not satisfied that the appeal to the PSSRB is a satisfactory recourse, let him say so. We will be happy to look at it. However, to my knowledge, to this day the procedures which are in place have been entirely satisfactory in resolving grievances of employees who feel that they have been unfairly treated.

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● (1150)

FINANCE

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON TAX AUDIT OF FISHERMEN

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue who is responsible for the audit of fishermen which has resulted in garnisheed wages, remortgaged homes, and exorbitant loans to pay back-owing income tax. With regard to a letter which I sent to the minister on December 10 which asked for an independent commission to investigate that tax audit and how fishermen are being treated, does the minister have such a report? His reply was that he would have his department carry out a report on that audit. Does the minister have that report now and is he prepared to divulge that information to the House?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, the audit is going ahead on the east and west coasts. There is no independent assessment of the audit. I