Questions

work under existing conditions is absolutely inhuman. How those girls can stand it, I don't know. Telephones are ringing and the girls are running around. The more confusion that exists, the fewer passports issued. No relief is in sight as far as I can see.

The idea of regional offices, whatever their merit may be, does not offer any solution; I wonder whether it could be a solution anyway. In regard to unemployment insurance the government asked the public to use the mails. It is now talking of reversing the process.

I do not think that the government does have a policy or has one clue about what to do in this situation. The minister talks of refunding the money paid for passports. Is he also going to refund the money people lose because they could not make a charter flight? There are more significant expenditures involved than just the passport fee.

The passport office was designed to operate at a nice, leisurely pace. That leisurely pace has now disappeared. I hope the minister will reply to the suggestion that an emergency does exist, and that he appoint an emergency controller for the passport office immediately to investigate what the problem in the office is, and get the situation cleared up. The minister's statement today is not one designed to instil any confidence for the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, if we were not aware of the facts in respect of the passport problem, we could believe that the opinions expressed by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat are exaggerated. But, it happens that we have had to help several persons to obtain their passports. We, of the Ralliement Créditiste, are experiencing the same difficulties and we must address the same criticisms to the minister because he has not taken in time the necessary steps to prevent such occurrences.

On the other hand, we are not blaming the officials of the passport office who, up to now, have fully co-operated with us.

However, since there has been in the last few months such an increase in the number of applications for passports, the minister's statement was, I think, too long in coming. We also believe that he did not resort to the proper means to alleviate the situation, because the problem is growing worse every month.

29180—517

NATIONAL HOUSING ACT, 1954

AMENDMENTS CLARIFYING DEFINITIONS AND DEALING WITH THE INTEREST RATE ON INSURED LOANS, AND WITH OTHER MATTERS

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-192, to amend the National Housing Act, 1954.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk).

BERTHIER—SOREL FERRY SERVICE

Question No. 1,739—**Mr. Caouette:**

1. Has the government considered, or is it considering, or will it, in the near future, consider the inauguration of a ferry service between Berthier and Sorel?

2. Has a study to this effect been made or will such a study be made?

3. If not, for what reasons?

4. If so, what are the government's plans?

5. At the present time, what means of transportation are available to these citizens to enable them to travel between Sorel and Berthier?

6. At the present time, what is the shortest route between Sorel and Berthier?

7. How many people from Berthier are presently working in Sorel?

8. How many people from Sorel are presently working in Berthier?

Hon. James Richardson (Acting Minister of Housing): The Canadian Transport Commission advises as follows: 1. A ferry service is on operation between Berthier (Ile St. Ignace) and Sorel.

2. See answer to question one.

3. See answer to question one.

4. See answer to question one.

5. Ferry service operating all year long.

6. One mile and a half via ferry.

7. Ferry operators report that 250 to 300 people work in Sorel and Tracy.

8. Ferry operators report approximately 15.

LAW OF THE SEA LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Question No. 1,842—**Mr. Harding:**

1. What specific legislative changes did Canada make as a result of becoming a signatory to the