

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, we received the report in the manner described. It has taken considerable time to have it translated and made available.

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and is based on the reply given by the Minister of Finance to the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam. Who is to finalize the policy pertaining to the coal mining industry in Nova Scotia? Is it going to be the public or the government?

Mr. Pearson: The government announces the policy, but surely my hon. friend will agree that the public should have the opportunity to make its views known on a matter of this importance when consideration is being given to it by the government. Surely that is the purpose of a democracy.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): That is a very good point, Mr. Speaker. Since it is a fact that it is now away over a year since the hon. member for Inverness-Richmond said there was going to be \$25 million made available to the coal mining industry, with \$10 million allotted to a new mine, when are we going to get some action?

Mr. Pearson: In respect of a policy of such importance involving such expenditures of money, and a policy which we hope will be in effect for many many years, surely the hon. member will agree that it is wise to take the necessary time to make sure that it is a right policy.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Why announce the policy if it is not a right policy?

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister aware that the public, which has a real interest in the Nova Scotia coal industry, is very much aware of what the situation is? Is the Prime Minister not aware that the Minister of National Health and Welfare, within the last two weeks in the constituency of Inverness-Richmond, restated the promise to give \$25 million to the coal industry, including \$10 million to open the new mine at Lingan?

Mr. Pearson: I am sure my hon. friend will be very happy about the policy when it is announced.

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South).]

[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON PENSIONS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

In view of the fact that our senior citizens have been writing us to ask when the government will raise the pension for the needy by \$30 to bring it to \$105 a month, can the minister tell us when the government will proceed with this increase?

[English]

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare): At this session, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Will this old age pension be retroactive? Will there be a prior date or will those pensions be paid to the aged from the date of enactment?

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that the hon. member is now anticipating the consideration of the legislation he has just referred to.

Mr. Caouette: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am not the one who anticipates, but rather it is the old people of Canada who are anxious to get their pensions as soon as possible.

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS**CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO ELECTION LEGISLATION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister. Now that the report of the committee on election expenses has been tabled in the house, when will this report along with the Canada Elections Act be referred to the committee on privileges and elections so that the desirable amendments to the Canada Elections Act can be made before the next time we need the provisions of this statute?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it is desirable that this be done without delay. We will be discussing the matter tomorrow morning in cabinet and will endeavour to get it before the committee