

newspapers and some 30 ethnocultural groups: we are looking at the whole aspect of the matter.

We do not feel that advertising should be part and parcel of keeping these papers in existence. I think these people should look to private industry for further advertising; I do not think they should depend upon the government for the whole aspect of advertising just for those particular papers, not like the previous government which only did it 30 days prior to the forthcoming election.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether this policy of eliminating ethnic advertising was done following the last election to punish the readers of those newspapers for their substantial support of this party.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): That is hardly a serious question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Northumberland.

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FINANCE

OPPOSITION TO MORTGAGE TAX DEDUCTIBILITY PROGRAM

Hon. George Hees (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Is it not a fact that the only objection the opposition has to the government's very excellent mortgage tax deductibility program is that they did not think of it first?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway.

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BELL CANADA

PROPOSED RATE INCREASES—PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications. Unlike the western Liberal friends to my right—who are understandably a little upset today—I will try to come to my question very quickly.

Is the minister aware that Bell Canada has proposed an experimental usage sensitive pricing program? In plain English, there will be no flat fee for telephone calls and one will pay by call. Is the minister aware of that? Is he in favour of that system? Is he prepared to order a public hearing on this matter before Bell Canada starts on the experimental system, controls the experiment and in fact brings the matter in as a *fait accompli*?

Oral Questions

Hon. David MacDonald (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that there can be no *fait accompli* without extensive public hearings being held by the appropriate regulatory authority. Quite obviously, the proposal by Bell with which they would like to proceed on a pilot basis raises a number of critical questions, not the least of which is the notion of user-pay that certainly has never been espoused by this particular government when it comes to flat rate service.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister is aware that with "Ma Bell" experiments have the habit of turning into practice, such as with the data pack systems and the phone centres. Could the minister tell the House whether he is prepared, in a future system, to allow the option between the user-pay and the flat rate system which we now have, and whether he is prepared, if Bell does an end-run around the CRTC in order to receive some more profits, to roll back those profits as the CRTC did with British Columbia Telephone?

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is a lawyer and he knows the law better than I do. He knows that there is no possibility whatsoever of Bell doing a so-called end-run. There would have to be very full public hearings and an examination by the appropriate regulatory authority before that sort of thing could happen.

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● (1500)

SOCIAL SCIENCES COUNCIL

PAY CHEQUES FOR STAFF OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL

Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a question to the Secretary of State. Will the minister tell the House whether he is aware that the staff of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council have received a letter which indicates that they will not receive their pay cheques tomorrow; and can he explain if this is just restricted to that council, or is it fully across the board in the Secretary of State's department?

Hon. David MacDonald (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council is an independent agency. But I will be quite happy to check into the matter. I have not heard about it, but I will certainly find out the details and report to him.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

PAY CHEQUES FOR PERSONNEL

Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre): In that case, Mr. Speaker, I would like to place my supplementary question with the President of the Treasury Board. Will he tell the House if the