

Oral Questions

report on that at this time. Neither am I in a position to give a report on how successful the RCMP have been this far.

Mr. Beatty: Over the course of the last two weeks the minister has made a number of statements which he is not willing to back up. He has claimed that it is impossible for this information to be leaked over the telephone. If it is in fact the case that these leaks have been very limited, will the minister tell the House today how many instances he has been able to turn up in which this information has been given out over the telephone. How many instances has he found? Surely, that would not jeopardize any police investigation.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the only one I have found so far is the case brought to the attention of this House pertaining to the Templeton affair and that of the other gentleman. I have not found any other case so far.

ALLEGATION TAX INFORMATION GIVEN TO POLICE ON
ROUTINE BASIS AND FALSE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY
DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, in connection with the confidentiality of tax information, I would like to put another question to the Minister of National Revenue. An agreement was entered into in 1972 under which it has been stated his department released certain information to the RCMP if it had to do with an organized crime matter. An official in the minister's department, and I want to know whether this is correct, told the Laycraft inquiry that tax information is given to the RCMP and police forces across Canada as a matter of routine, was given to them before the 1972 agreement and is still being given to them, not on the basis of organized crime but as a routine matter. Will the minister tell us whether the evidence of his official is correct? If it is correct, is he putting a stop to the practice? What is the situation now?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): I will give that consideration, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to ask a supplementary of a minister who says he is only going to give it consideration. Will the minister check into a situation that has been reported in evidence given to the Laycraft inquiry where an official of his department admitted that he gave false information and false testimony to a judge of the Federal Court of Canada in connection with the investigation of the Royal American Shows matter. He gave two different versions of their cooperation with the RCMP, one to the Federal Court and another to Mr. Justice Laycraft. Has the minister investigated that? Can he or will he report to the House because, if this is true, it should not be tolerated.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the inquiry is still going on. I am certainly keeping abreast of it. I am not in a position to say whether a particular employee told the truth to the inquiry. We are certainly looking into it.

[Mr. Guay (St. Boniface).]

Mr. Crosbie: If the Minister of National Revenue is not in a position to answer these questions, who is? Who is responsible for the department?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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● (1422)

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

EFFECT ON ATLANTIC PROVINCES OF REMOVAL OF SOME BENEFICIARIES—POSSIBILITY OF COMPENSATORY PROGRAMS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The government announced yesterday that the changes in unemployment insurance eligibility rules would take effect on December 4. Considering that these changes will remove 226,000 Canadians from eligibility for benefits next year and considering that all the provinces in Atlantic Canada strongly opposed those changes because they will lead to an increase in the welfare cost burden on the cities and on the provinces, may I ask whether the minister has calculated the additional impact these changes will have on welfare costs, particularly in Atlantic Canada, and tell us whether the government proposes to introduce any compensatory programs for the benefit of provinces adversely affected?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Despite the hyperbole and despite the accusations made by the hon. member and by members in his party, the impact on the welfare rolls of the provinces mentioned will be insignificant—we have indicated the particular figures. We have also indicated that the Canada Works program and other programs will fill in the gap and ensure that those provinces are not unduly affected by this change in the eligibility requirement from eight weeks to 12 weeks—we dropped the figure originally proposed primarily because of representations made by Liberal members of the House from the Atlantic provinces to ten weeks—and given the initiative which people in that part of the country are known to possess I believe they will find little difficulty in getting the extra two weeks employment; they are not primarily interested in getting unemployment benefits but in getting work, and that is the main objective.

Mr. Broadbent: The minister has moved from hyperbole to baloney.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!