

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Simpson: Mr. Speaker, when I first posed the question to the Postmaster General I made a specific request in respect of salaries. I believe this was about mid-February.

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Speaker, there were a number of other matters included in the question asked, one of which was whether we would consider closing post offices where the postmasters themselves were nearing the retirement age. That was one question among others. At that time the deputy minister said we would certainly consider this if the postmaster was within eight or nine months of retirement. Obviously we would not close the post office prior to that retirement date.

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. Georges-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, in view of the many hundreds of letters of complaint I am receiving from my constituency regarding the closing of some 60 post offices, will the minister explain how I can mail my replies when there are almost no post offices left?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**PARIS—ALLOCATION OF TELEVISION TIME TO SECRETARY OF STATE**

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Has-tings): Mr. Speaker, in view of the very generous allotment of TV and radio time given Mr. Cardinal who was representing the government of Québec in Paris a short time ago, and the very cavalier treatment meted out to our Secretary of State, and the complete refusal of the government to permit the use of TV and radio time, has the government made any official protest?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I understand the facts are not those which have been recorded in some papers, but that the French an offert—did offer—some air time to the Secretary of State at a time when he had to be back here in Ottawa on another engagement.

Mr. Hees: In other words, on the late, late show.

ATOMIC ENERGY**POSSIBLE RE-OPENING OF URANIUM MINES THROUGH ADDITIONAL PURCHASES**

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question, of which I have given notice, to the

Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce in his capacity as the minister acting for the acting minister of energy, mines and resources. My question arises from a news release by the minister on Friday last concerning additional production of heavy water and prospective sales of heavy water nuclear generating stations abroad. Does the government contemplate additional purchases of uranium and may we shortly expect an announcement of the re-opening of uranium mines in Canada?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, there is no change in the government's policy on uranium; uranium is being purchased at this moment for the stockpile. In respect of the possibility of re-opening mines or opening new mines, the experts I could consult, between the time I received notice of this question and now, feel that this may have to wait another year until the big requirement for uranium occurs. Nobody can be sure, however, of what the plans of utility companies in Canada and abroad are in their long term planning for uranium supplies.

Mr. Aiken: Mr. Speaker, does the bidding on overseas power plants include the supply of uranium oxide?

Mr. Pepin: It does generally, at least for the first fuel loading.

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, can the minister say whether there has been any change recently in the long standing policy that any country purchasing fissionable material from Canada must subject itself to certain conditions?

Mr. Speaker: I would think the hon. member is now asking for a statement of policy and I doubt that this can be done at this time.

FINANCE**PRESSURE ON BANK OF CANADA TO MAINTAIN INTEREST RATE**

Mr. Max Salisman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, in view of the success of the Minister of Finance in his moral suasion of banks in regard to the \$400 million refinancing operation, can he say whether he is now prepared to use the same sort of moral suasion on the Bank of Canada to see that the prime rate is not increased?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the bond issue went very well, in spite of the fact