

Inquiries of the Ministry

He said: The purpose of this bill is to place all candidates during federal elections on an equal footing so far as some television coverage is concerned. The very high cost of television time prevents many candidates from using the medium and tips the scales in favour of those with large financial resources. The bill states that broadcasting undertakings shall provide each candidate with a total of 15 minutes free television time during the course of an election campaign.

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

QUARANTINE ACT

MEASURE TO PREVENT INTRODUCTION INTO
CANADA OF INFECTIOUS OR CONTAGIOUS
DISEASES

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare) moved the first reading of Bill S-12 (from the Senate), to prevent the introduction into Canada of infectious or contagious diseases.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM**

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING
FRENCH-SPEAKING UNITS WITHIN
PUBLIC SERVICE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question arising out of the publication of the third volume of the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. What is the position of the government with regard to the creation of French speaking units within the public service? Will the Prime Minister take this opportunity to state on behalf of the government that this recommendation denies any concept of effective bilingualism and that the creation of linguistic ghettos within the Public Service will not solve anything?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot, of course, make any comment. I received the two large volumes at six o'clock, when I tabled them in the House. It will take some time for the government to study them.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the government accept the assessment made by the royal commission as

to the failure of the governments' attempts to encourage bilingualism within the Public Service and the methods followed?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before the Prime Minister attempts to reply to the question I would suggest that this line of questioning should more properly be answered by way of a general statement which might be made on motions.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I am simply attempting to ascertain the policy of the government with respect to certain very important and far-reaching recommendations made by the commission. May I ask a supplementary question with Your Honour's permission.

Has there been any change, or is any change contemplated, as a result of the report in the policy set out by the former Prime Minister, Mr. Pearson, underlining the primacy of merit in appointments and preferments within the public service? Will the Prime Minister assure the House that merit will continue to be the decisive consideration?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, how can I say whether there will be any change made in light of the recommendations until I have read the report?

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State. Was the minister philosophizing, prophesying, or did he just have plain inside information when he said at the opening of the Public Service Language Centre on November 12 that units of the Public Service "might be developed in the future," using French as the working language?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): I am not a prophet, Mr. Speaker. I had no idea whatsoever at that time that this recommendation would appear in the report of the B and B Commission. The only reasonable explanation is the one that the hon. member appears to reject, that is that the recommendation is dictated by common sense and is an extension of the policy we are already applying.

[*English*]

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to trespass any further, but in view of the importance of the question may I ask a further supplementary. Do I understand from the