

deputy ministers had been instructed to do that very monitoring and make reports on the departmental use of office space, will the Minister of Public Works assure this House that the committee of deputy ministers has been reporting all excesses in use of office space according to its mandate under the guidelines issued in May, 1977?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give that assurance off the top of my head: I will have to verify it. I would like to indicate to the hon. member that in the Senate national finance committee report they recommended that the Department of Public Works, as the agent of the Treasury Board, have this monitoring role. In my testimony before that Senate committee, I said that while we are not eagerly seeking the role of policeman as far as the utilization of office space is concerned, I feel that with our operations right across Canada we are the logical people to fulfil that role and we would be happy to do so.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION OWNED OR LEASED BY GOVERNMENT

Mr. Robert de Cotret (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Public Works. As the minister knows, total accommodation inventory has increased from 6.2 million square metres to over eight million square metres, a dramatic increase of 23 per cent over last fiscal year.

Would the minister explain, in light of past statements made by himself and by his colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, that public service growth would be held to less than 1 per cent, where all the additional space is going? What is this space being used for?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I am of the older generation and have not yet quite mastered the metric system. I will have to sit down and multiply by 11 all the figures the hon. member gave, to verify them. I do know that we have not been increasing our total space.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Ho, ho!

Mr. Buchanan: I hear "ho, ho!" Perhaps the hon. member is talking about space that is owned, as opposed to space that is being leased or some other areas where there have been significant changes. We have been changing the ratios.

I dealt with the question of usage of leased space in response to a question put last week by the hon. member for Huron. I think we are doing a very effective job in this period of transition and in making certain that the space is effectively and properly used. We are right on the transition point—transition in the sense of moving from leased space into our own space—where, if anything, we would be at our maximum right now. As I indicated, within the last six weeks over half the space that was supposed to be vacant has gone off our inventory.

Oral Questions

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, in recognizing that there is fairly clear evidence of inadequate control and weakness in management of the over-all federal realty resources, as the Minister of Public Works himself admitted during the proceedings of the Standing Committee on National Finance in the other place, is the minister still satisfied that his department could accept the responsibility for ensuring effective use of accommodation resources so that Canadian taxpayers receive adequate value for the half billion dollars spent annually on the accommodation program in the Department of Public Works?

Mr. Buchanan: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a repetition of the question put by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton. I indicated in my testimony before that committee that, while we were not eagerly seeking the role of policeman vis-à-vis space utilization, I felt very strongly that our department is the logical agency on behalf of Treasury Board to make certain that the space is being properly and adequately used.

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HEALTH AND WELFARE

FUNDING OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Ursula Appolloni (York South): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Can the minister assure the House that no funds from her department support the publication of the fall, 1978, edition of the Planned Parenthood Federation newsletter which, by despicable and insidious innuendo, vilifies the entire Catholic Church?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the funds granted to the Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada do not support the preparation and publication of the newsletters. Our funds are used strictly for the operation of their national office.

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PUBLIC WORKS

CONSTRUCTION OF TAXATION CENTRE AT SUDBURY, ONT.

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the fact that about two years ago the government announced, as part of its decentralization program, the building of a taxation data centre in Sudbury, in view of the fact that the government has obtained the land from the city of Sudbury and has proposed to start construction this fall, in view of the fact that we are sitting with one of the most massive rates of unemployment, second only to Newfoundland, particularly in the construction trade, and in view of the fact that the Minister of National Revenue informed me by letter on October 25 that because of cutbacks announced they cannot start construction