

concerns the secret Farlinger Inquiry. Will the Minister give us a guarantee that public servants who present information or evidence to the secret Farlinger Inquiry will be immune from recrimination that might flow from the nature of their testimony?

Since I only have one supplementary, will he also, in the interest of fairness, give us an unequivocal guarantee that Canadian citizens presenting evidence to the task force established today by this Party will be free from recrimination absolutely that might flow as a consequence of their testimony?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised at the nature of the question asked by the Hon. Member. First of all, he is again questioning the professional expertise of Mr. Farlinger and the people who will be working with him. I have no doubts as to the integrity and the professional capabilities of Mr. Farlinger and the people who will be working with him, and as for suggesting that public servants or people from the general public would risk suffering recrimination, I think it is hardly proper to make such suggestions when there is no good reason to expect this to occur. I sincerely doubt the good faith of the Hon. Member in asking the question, and I say that in doing so he is questioning the good faith of Mr. Farlinger and the people who will be working with him.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Chair has no desire to inhibit Hon. Members at this point but there must be a reasonable sharing with the Parties. A supplementary question to the Hon. Member for Yukon, but will Hon. Members bear in mind that the Chair is trying to be fair?

#### REQUEST FOR IMMUNITY GUARANTEES

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, I have one question for the Minister of National Revenue. We have reason for the apprehensions that we are expressing because of the conduct of the Minister of Finance in the last week. The simple question is: will he give the guarantees we seek of immunity and no harassment for those who appear before our task force which will travel the country? That is all.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, I am indeed surprised at the Hon. Member's insistence on this point. The Members opposite really seem to be suffering from a form of persecution mania. I said before that this Government gave Canadians a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom which guarantees in the Constitution our democratic rights, free speech and other freedoms, and as for the Progressive Conservative Members who seem to be paranoid to the point of doubting that the Charter applies to them, they ought to know that it applies to them as well.

#### Oral Questions

[English]

#### PENSIONS

##### DISABILITY PENSION DECISIONS MADE WITHOUT BENEFIT OF MEDICAL ADVICE

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. When making a judgment on a disability pension application, and after having taken six months to make that judgment, how could the Pension Board have made that judgment without the benefit of medical advice from the doctors, surgeons or specialists who have been taking care of the citizen who is making the application for pension?

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the Hon. Member could have had the opportunity to give me the specifics. I just cannot answer a very hypothetical case which he describes. Disability pensions take a long time and often create frustration, to say the least. We have done everything we can to speed up the system, and all the easier cases in particular. If the Hon. Member has the case of a particular constituent in mind, we will do everything we can to help.

● (1450)

**Mr. Deans:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have in mind a case; I have in mind a number of cases.

#### PENSION BOARD PROCEDURES

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, of late there have been a lot more cases where individuals have been informed after a six-month delay that their pension applications have been turned down. In every single case there was never an examination by the medical practitioner of the citizen making the claim, nor was there any attempt to contact his doctor or any physician who took care of him.

How can the pension board, after waiting six months, inform any citizen who has applied for a pension based on disability that he has been rejected, when it has not even had the decency to go to the doctors involved and ask for an update on that individual's medical condition?

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I am even more surprised that the Hon. Member suggests there are many cases. He should bring them to my attention as soon as possible. There are well established procedures, including appeal procedures, on cases of disability under the Canada Pension Plan. If he can give us any specifics, we will look into the matter right away.