

would table a letter sent to certain ministers. I rise under Standing Order 41(2) to table copies of the letter sent to provincial ministers of housing and/or municipal affairs by the minister asking that they freeze the rents applicable to senior citizens in public housing projects.

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ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Mr. John Harney (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, since this House this morning has heard considerable and due concern expressed about the status of the official languages in this country, and since tomorrow is the great day itself, I should like to move, seconded by the hon. member for York North, that this House give immediate and hearty recognition to the fact that tomorrow is March 17. Erin go bragh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

MANPOWER

PLACEMENT PRIORITIES—DIRECTIVE OF MARCH 9— MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, arising out of the blame that the Minister of Manpower and Immigration yesterday placed upon his deputy minister for the contents of the departmental directive of March 9 regarding the priorities to be followed by manpower offices in filling jobs. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether this means that his government has abandoned the principle of ministerial responsibility for the conduct of the department.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): In no way, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the responses of the minister in the past few days have indicated that he intended to share any political blame—

Mr. Hees: You don't share it. You take it.

Mr. Trudeau: —that he intended to share any political blame with the government for any act or omission of ours. It is clear to me that the minister, yesterday, was answering a question of fact which was put to him. In no circumstances, to me or to anyone else to my knowledge, has he indicated that he found the conduct of the deputy minister one that he wanted to blame publicly.

Mr. Stanfield: I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether, as leader of the government, he approves of a minister, in this case the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, allowing a directive of this importance, affecting the welfare of so many Canadians, to go out without the personal examination, personal supervision and personal approval of the minister? Is this the standard of ministeri-

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Oral Questions

al responsibility in matters of this importance that the Prime Minister expects of his ministers? Is this standard of responsibility satisfactory to the Prime Minister?

Mr. Trudeau: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the results have not been satisfactory and the minister has said as much to the House. But in matters of administration of this kind there are bound to be some decisions taken at various levels in the department of which the minister is not aware all the time. I do not know whether, with regard to this kind of directive, it is a rule for the minister to have seen it in advance or not, but I do know that as a matter of practice in administration things are done all the time in ministers' names, and they should be done that way. The minister can only check the most important and those that traditionally or legally or by regulation come up to him.

Mr. Stanfield: Is it the view of the Prime Minister that a directive of this importance, potentially and actually affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of Canadians, is a directive that can be delegated properly to the bureaucracy, to a deputy minister? Or is it a matter—I put it to the Prime Minister very clearly—that he expects his ministers to supervise and accept not only parliamentary responsibility but personal responsibility as well?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think that under our system a minister must, and does in fact, accept responsibility for everything that is done under his administration. I repeat that as a matter of practice the minister of a department cannot possibly know every detail of every act done by every official within his department.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

BENEFIT CONTROL—OFFERING OF JOBS BY MANPOWER OFFICIALS BEFORE CLAIMANTS DISQUALIFIED— PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Does any co-ordination exist between the Canada Manpower Centres and the Unemployment Insurance Commission? In other words, does the Unemployment Insurance Commission cut off claimants by computer before manpower officials have had an opportunity to interview the claimants affected and offer them a job?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, there is co-ordination between the Department of Manpower and Immigration and the Unemployment Insurance Commission, and it has been my impression since taking this portfolio that the desire of all hon. members is that there be greater co-ordination between the two agencies. With regard to the operation of disqualification procedures and benefit control, I elaborated on that in my statement the other day and I do not think I can add anything to it at this time.

Mr. Rose: With a great deal of respect, Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister has begged my question. I was asking him about the order in which these claimants are cut off