

Mr. Diefenbaker: The other day the minister did not know of the existence of this at all. He looked very abashed and unusually suavely silent. If he is looking into it, he must be convinced there is something wrong. I would ask him whether he has been so convinced because this is a dastardly interference with Canadian rights.

● (1440)

REASON DEPARTMENT CENSORING RUSSIAN LANGUAGE BROADCASTS OF CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and it is on the subject of CBC international programming to the Soviet Union. Will the minister tell the House why his department has been attempting to influence the nature of such programming, and particularly why his department played a part in censoring a broadcast by the CBC Russian language commentator Dr. F. Yaroshevsky of Toronto reporting on a demonstration in Toronto against the mistreatment of Jews in the Soviet Union?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my department is not responsible for the operations of the CBC. We have absolutely no authority nor control over the broadcasting policy of that corporation.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

REASON FOR RESTRICTIONS ON SUBJECTS MENTIONED BY COMMENTATORS ON INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTS

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): The minister honestly misunderstood my question. I realize his department has no authority over the CBC, but it was his department that committed the act to which I have referred, and that is why I directed the question to him.

I will direct my supplementary question to the Secretary of State responsible for the CBC. Is the minister prepared to explain to the House why CBC radio international personnel have been forbidden to give background information on the news or to comment on any political or economic matters, and especially why persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union has been specifically censored from certain broadcasts at the request of the Department of External Affairs?

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any of that, but I will be pleased to look into it.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE

REASON FOR DELAY IN GRANTING INCREASE PROVIDED TO EMPLOYEES BY AGREEMENTS

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board who was behind the curtains a while ago.

Oral Questions

An hon. Member: Ring the bell, he will return.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Yes. Well, I am waiting for him.

An hon. Member: He is coming.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Well!

An hon. Member: You could put the question to his parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for telling him to come back.

He has already been asked several questions in the House—at least four if memory serves—concerning decisions taken about collective bargainings in the public sector, granting salary increases to several professional groups, such as biologists, sociologists, statisticians and agronomists. Some of those decisions were deferred and others referred to the Anti-Inflation Board. I would like to know whether the minister has inquired about the matter, because the employees involved have been waiting up to 12 months for the results of those decisions.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, according to the information which I have obtained, in the case of biologists—and that question was put to me yesterday by the member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta—their retroactive payment, in accordance with the agreement, was mailed to them and they all have now been paid. As for the others, I have no information about them.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question.

Would the minister be prepared to make an investigation on the other questions and report to the House? Some of them have been waiting for 12 months.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, every time there has been an interim agreement, I asked my officials to expedite retroactive payments to civil servants. I have been told that, generally, this is done within 90 days, as required by law. I must admit that in the case of biologists, following the agreement with the union concerned and the ruling of the Anti-Inflation Board, the delay did extend beyond 90 days and I asked my officials to make sure this does not happen again.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

BLUE TONGUE—STEPS TO ENSURE VETERINARIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR QUARANTINE PROGRAM WILL NOT STRIKE

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I should like to direct a question to his parliamentary secretary. In light of the minister's statement on June 15 in which he announced the imposition of a new blue tongue quarantine in British Columbia, what steps is the minister taking to ensure that the federal veterinarians responsible for the program will not go on strike?