Inquiries of the Ministry

FRIENDSHIP CENTRE, TORONTO—REASON FOR DELAY IN GRANT

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. As the grant to the Toronto Indian friendship centre was apparently promised by the Secretary of State's department, as a grant from the province is dependent on the federal grant, and as the centre has been forced to close its doors because of the delay, would the Prime Minister look into the situation forthwith with a view to straightening out where this federal grant should come from?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I take it from the hon. member's question that the federal grant, if it is to come, would come from the Secretary of State's department. Therefore, I will refer the question to him and ask him to reply to the hon. member in the House.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

REQUEST FOR EARLY STATEMENT ON DEFINITION OF INCOME

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. For some time the minister has been looking into the matter of reviewing the regulation defining income under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Has the minister reached any decision with respect to that regulation, and is he able to make any report?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I must apologize for not being able to report fully. I have been away from the House more than is customary in recent days. I will look into the matter and see if we have arrived at conclusions on the basis of the representations received from the affected groups, both employers' associations and employees' associations.

Mr. Douglas: In view of the fact that this was one of the big hang-ups in handling unemployment insurance payments last winter, can the minister assure the House that this matter will be clarified before the House prorogues?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I will admit that this was one of the reasons for the delays but I would remind the hon. gentleman that with a plan such as we have put together, providing up to $100 a week under very liberal conditions—I am talking about small "l" liberal conditions—someone has to pay for it and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I really think we are entering into debate between the hon. member and the minister.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

STATEMENT BY PREMIER BOURASSA ON FEDERALISM—POSITION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Sunday night the Quebec premier publicly stated that he was gradually losing faith in the principle of a viable federalism, because of the lack of consultation prior to some federal decisions. Considering the circumstances, can the Prime Minister give us the assurance that, from now on, prior consultations will take place between the two governments with regard to any question having a direct or an indirect bearing on the province of Quebec?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think that, for the past four years, this government has shown that it was ready to consult the provinces more than any other federal government in the past.

As for the practice followed in certain areas, an exchange of correspondence between Premier Bourassa and myself, between September and March, indicated that we were even prepared to insert in our statutes methods of payment which would depend on the provincial legislation. We were prepared to do this not only in the field of family allowances, but also, as indicated in my letter, in other fields. This letter has unfortunately remained without effect, on the one hand, because discussion was centred on family allowances and, on the other hand, because the other subjects could not be raised. However, the attitude of the federal government still remains the same: We wish to consult the provinces as much as possible and we shall keep on doing so provided, of course, the latter do not break negotiations with us.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Lotbinière wish to put a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister?

QUEBEC POSITION RESPECTING RECENT BUDGET—CONTENTS OF CORRESPONDENCE ALLEGEDLY EXCHANGED

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Since the Quebec premier on that occasion spoke of changing his government strategy for the development of future federal-provincial relations and even of retaliating, has the federal government received since then any communication from the Quebec premier pertaining to the recent federal budget and, if yes, can the Prime Minister reveal the contents of this communication?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think I answered yesterday that, to my knowledge, no such representation was made to the government. Since then I do not know of any formal communication. I repeat, I believe the House and the general public should indeed read my letter of March 11 in which, I think, I proposed to the Quebec government that the discussions we were having on family allowances be extended to