

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Labour Unions Returns Act, which came into force in 1962, was to determine the effects of non-resident ownership and control of corporations, and to chart the flow of funds between the Canadian and U.S. sections of international unions.

Last October 4 I asked in the house why the annual returns from the corporations section under the act were complete only up until the year 1963. On adjournment debate on October 8 the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang) stated that it was not the intention of the government to let this legislation waste away. He also said that the returns have been made on time but the difficulty has been in compiling, investigating and reporting upon the data received. It was stated that the corporations are not in default in filing the returns and that the 1967 returns are on hand.

There are 70 full time employees filing the corporations' returns. My question of the Department of Trade and Commerce was how many corporations have not filed returns under the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act. The answer was that these figures were not available, but I later received an answer to my questions concerning the total number of corporations for which returns must be filed.

It seems strange that these figures are known. The statement was that 185 corporations are under investigation for 1965, 745 for 1966 and 2,990 for 1967, yet the Minister without Portfolio says all 1967 returns are on hand. I ask whether or not the responsible government department intends enforcing the penalty provision of the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act, and if not why not?

A further point should be clarified. In view of the debate which took place on this measure in 1962 and 1965, and particularly in view of the concern expressed by the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs in 1966 over the manner in which the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act was being administered as shown in the minutes of proceedings and evidence No. 13, July 5, 1966, what specific steps have been taken to implement the committee's warnings to officials of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics who appeared before it on July 5, 1966? They were instructed to proceed forthwith with the preparation of any amendments or revisions necessary to define clearly the type of organized labour group which the legislation was intended to cover?

I suggest that either this act must be made worthwhile in its entirety or the government should move to abolish it. I would also suggest to the Minister without Portfolio that tonight he should not repeat the words he used in his answer some time ago.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, as was indicated in the discussion of this matter some time ago, this is not the easiest legislation to administer because of the large number of corporations that may fall under the provisions of the act. Steps are being taken now, in correspondence and other means of communication, to acquaint firms with their obligations under the act and to discuss fully the reasons for not supplying the required information. As a result of this correspondence and communication, the 1967 returns are being received at the rate of 200 to 300 each week. The process of making appropriate contacts with the number of firms involved is very time consuming and staff resources must be allocated between the various parts of the program.

Many of the delinquent firms are small and do not have full-time accounting and legal staff, and therefore do not fully understand their obligations under the act. In some cases, the companies do not have a full-time office staff, and on occasion do not have a permanent place of business and are therefore difficult to locate. In some cases, the company concerned is inactive or in the process of being wound up, and it is difficult to locate a responsible officer of the corporation to furnish the information.

The Dominion Statistician is continuing his efforts to secure compliance with the reporting provisions of the act. The penalty under the act is not automatic, but prosecutions will be initiated of those officers and corporations that deliberately refuse to comply with the provisions of the act.

[*Translation*]

AIRPORTS—QUEBEC—LOCATION OF
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. André Fortin (Loibinière): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, I put to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) a question that reads in part as follows:

—with regard to the selection of the site for the future international airport which is to be announced before the end of January. Can he tell us whether such decision will be taken by technocrats or by the cabinet?

The minister replied: By the cabinet.