

ELECTIONS

REPORT ON WAYS OF REDUCING ELECTION PERIODS—
REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, on February 10 I tabled a copy of a report by the Chief Electoral Office of Canada, dated December, 1975, entitled "An examination of possible ways of reducing the electoral period". I have had discussions with the House leaders of the other parties. I appeared before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections yesterday and it seemed to be unanimously agreed that it would be useful to refer this report to the committee. I wonder whether the House would agree unanimously to that being done.

Mr. Baldwin: We are prepared to agree. Having in mind the way the government is going, it might be a good idea to shorten the period for an election.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we agree wholeheartedly.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the proposal of the President of the Privy Council. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 3,332, 3,670, 3,763, 3,807, 3,998 and 4,016.

[Text]

PUBLIC WORKS—RENTAL OF SPACE—TORONTO-DOMINION
CENTRE, TORONTO

Question No. 3,332—Mr. Beatty:

1. Does the government rent space on the top (54th) floor of the Toronto-Dominion Centre, Toronto, Ontario and, if so (a) when did it first do so (b) for what is it being used?

2. What is the present cost per assignable square foot and what was the cost per assignable square foot when first leased?

3. How many square feet are being rented and how many were rented when space was first leased?

4. When was the present lease signed and what is its duration?

5. What attempts were made to secure other less expensive space for this purpose before space was rented on the 54th floor and for what reason was it decided that this particular location would be the most suitable?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works): 1. Yes (a) November 1, 1973 (b) Part by Public Service Appeals Branch (1,798 sq. ft.), remainder by Revenue Canada Regional Appeals Branch (4,500 sq. ft.).

Order Paper Questions

2. Present cost \$12—Cost when first leased \$12.

3. 6,298 sq. ft. current—6,298 sq. ft. when first rented.

4. November 1, 1973—1 yr.—renewed March 1, 1975 with an expiration date of May 31, 1977.

5. It is a stringent requirement of the Revenue Canada Regional Appeals Branch that it be located in the same building as the Department of Justice, and an equally desirable requirement of the Public Service Appeals Branch that they remain in close proximity to the Public Service Commission. In the past, Justice and Regional Appeals shared space on the 24th floor of the subject building, held under lease terminating on May 31, 1977. Justice needed to expand on the 24th floor which necessitated relocation of Regional Appeals. The Public Service Appeals Branch shared accommodation with the Public Service Commission in space on the 8th floor of the subject building, under lease also expiring May 31, 1977. Both branches of the Commission were experiencing expansion problems which could not be resolved in the existing or adjoining space on the 8th floor, which necessitated the relocation of one to permit the expansion of both. The subject space of this submission, 6,298 square feet on the 54th floor, was originally leased to accommodate the Airport Inquiries Commission (Pickering), the Hon. Mr. Justice Hugh P. Gibson, Commissioner, for a fixed term of one year from November 1, 1973, to October 31, 1974, under Treasury Board Minute No. 725154 dated February 14, 1974. The lease was subsequently extended on a month-to-month basis to February 28, 1975, to provide continuing accommodation for the Airport Commission and the Steel Profits Inquiry Commission. The Hon. Mr. Justice Willard Z. Estey, Commissioner, which by mutual agreement shared a common staff of officers and support personnel. Full consideration was given to the only other alternative means of providing for the requirements which was to relocate the Revenue Appeals Board and the Public Service Appeals Board into new leased accommodation in the immediate vicinity. It was readily apparent that implementation of that solution would have resulted in a much higher cost to the Crown due to the prevailing rental rates and attendant high cost of tenant improvements over a short term.

PRODUCTION AND SALE OF REPLICA HAND GUNS

Question No. 3,670—Mr. Brisco:

Are there any legal restraints for the production and sale of replica hand guns and, if not, are any being proposed?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): If a replica hand gun is not capable of being fired or adapted to enable it to be fired, it does not fall within the Criminal Code definition of firearm. There are no legal restraints under federal law concerning the production and sale of replicas and none are being proposed at the present time. There are, however, provisions in the Criminal Code concerning the use of imitation weapons. Under section 83 of the Criminal Code, it is an indictable offence to carry or possess a weapon or imitation thereof for a purpose dangerous to the public peace or for the purpose of committing an offence. In addition, pursuant to section 302(d) of the Code, every one commits robbery who steals from any person while armed with an offensive weapon or imitation thereof.