[*English*]

COMMUNICATIONS

REQUEST FOR CORRECTION OF DEFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT TELEPHONE SERVICE

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister in charge of the government telephone network. It arises from my conversation with the operator in the Montreal office of the government telecommunications agency this morning. She asked "where is the House of Commons?"

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McCleave: Could the minister advise her?

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of Communications): I would be glad to, Mr. Speaker.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

DATE OF PROCEEDING WITH BILL CONCERNING MEMBERS' SALARIES

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader. When the Prime Minister made his speech to the nation regarding the anti-inflation cuts by this government, one of the highlights of his announcement was the freezing of the salaries of members of parliament. Would the government House leader inform the House when he plans to proceed with Bill C-81, which in all probability is the only area in which the government plans to exercise any restraint?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to learn of this support for the bill in its present form by the hon. member. I did not think there was any great urgency because our salaries have not been escalated by the 7 per cent, as provided for in the bill, so we are not spending any unnecessary money.

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FISHERIES

USE OF REPLACEMENT COST AS BASIS FOR SETTLING STORM DAMAGE CLAIMS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of State (Fisheries). In negotiations between the province of New Brunswick and the government of Canada it is my understanding that representations have been made to have replacement cost as the guideline for compensation under emergency measures settlements with regard to damaged property. Will the minister support this principle, and will he present it as a proper term of settlement on behalf of the fishermen of that area?

● (1500)

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)): Mr. Speaker, I have asked for some information on this. I am informed that the items are not eligible for inclusion if they are insurable—that is vessels and items of that type. However, for non-insurable items the intent of the assistance is to restore affected persons to predisaster conditions. I believe if the province wants to support this level they would not have any difficulty.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

RUG RANKING OF SECRETARIES—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO CORRECT

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Has the government yet reached a decision to abolish the practice of rug ranking in the public service? In other words, will secretaries in the public service now be paid according to the work they do rather than in accordance with the status of the persons for whom they work?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, we intend to proceed in that direction. The subject is very complex and requires intensive analyses. We hope to reach a conclusion in the near future, while taking into account the budgetary restrictions which we must face.

[*English*]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will a decision be reached soon enough so that in the current negotiations between the Treasury Board and the ST's rug ranking will not apply?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to give that assurance to the hon. member.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

MR. BROADBENT—MAILING OF INSERTS WITH OLD AGE PENSION AND FAMILY ALLOWANCE CHEQUES—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Yesterday the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) raised a question of privilege and I indicated at the time that I would give the matter 24 hours' consideration. I indicated that my preliminary assessment was that the problem was one of grievance with the actions of the ministry for including in the mailing out of family allowance and other departmental cheques some message from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)—that that was a question of grievance or disagreement with a course of conduct and ought to be a matter of airing the disagreement as a grievance or a matter of debate.

In examining the clear definition of my distinguished predecessor on questions of privilege, that was taken upon