

We want the full Charter to apply, we are not trying to go around it, we just want the courts to decide—

Mr. Broadbent: You are going around it now.

Mr. Trudeau: We want the courts to say publicly what the Charter means, and the Hon. Member would know that if I were to say the Charter means this, he would say, "Go to the courts". That is what we are doing, Madam Speaker.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF VISCOUNT THOMAS OF TONYPANDY,
FORMER SPEAKER AT WESTMINSTER

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the distinguished presence in our gallery of the Right Hon. Viscount Thomas of Tonypany, whom Members will remember as George Thomas, the former Speaker of the House of Commons of Great Britain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

● (1430)

HEALTH AND WELFARE

ISSUANCE OF CHILD HEALTH RECORDS

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In a newspaper report over the weekend a term was quoted whereby, supposedly, the Minister is thinking of issuing a "health passport". I am wondering, as are many of my constituents, just how this passport will work, and will all Canadians be asked to carry this passport? Will the Minister please elaborate for us?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I am very surprised to have a chance to answer immediately—

Mr. Nielsen: Oh, surprise, surprise.

Miss Bégin:—and to explain that in a few weeks we will be issuing to the families of Canadian diplomats—and maybe that is why the press gave it the name of "health passport"—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Bégin:—and to our Armed Forces, a little booklet for their children. It is called "Child Health Record", and it is to keep track of smallpox, chicken pox and measles shots, and what not, and it has nothing to do with anything that would be imposed on Canadians. It has nothing to do with medicare or the new Canada Health Act, as I have clearly said.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

INCOME TAX

DELAYS IN PROCESSING TAXPAYERS' RETURNS

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. The Minister will know that thousands of Canadians are still waiting for their income tax refunds. The delay in processing this year's refunds was a direct result of a one-month delay in sending out the blank returns and a two-month delay while the computers were reprogrammed. Now it is too late to do anything about the 1982 returns. What steps are being taken by the Government to ensure that there are not these unconscionable delays in the processing of 1983 income tax returns?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I am glad the Hon. Member brought up the subject. I listened carefully to the preamble to his question in which he mentioned the exact causes of the delay in mailing or processing income tax returns, and in fact, departed from what was said by his colleague from Athabasca and from his own earlier statement, both of which were entirely irresponsible in their conclusions as to the reasons for the delay. I would like to point out that today, 98 per cent of income tax returns have been processed and that over \$6 billion has been refunded to Canadian taxpayers. We were sorry about the fact that the delay in passing legislation in the House caused the delay in processing income tax returns. We are taking every possible step to ensure that next year, we shall be able to process returns as quickly as possible and expedite the mailing of tax refunds to taxpayers, as has been our custom in the past.

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, that is not what the Director of Taxation for P.E.I. said last January 7.

AMENDING LEGISLATION

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): I would like to direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. The Minister is on record as saying that he wants to "end the uncertainty over our tax laws and let affected taxpayers know precisely where they stand". That is what he said last December 7. The Minister of Finance tabled the budget on April 19. It is now five months later, and the enabling legislation has still not been brought forward for debate. When will the Government bring forward for debate the income tax legislation in order to eliminate administrative delays, to allow for effective tax planning, and to eliminate delays in processing the 1983 income tax returns?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I welcome the eagerness of the Opposition to deal with this particular legislation. I remind the Hon. Member that the Ways and Means Motions are before the parliamentary committee on finance. I invite the committee to deal quickly and effectively with those measures. I can tell him that, as soon as