

Oral Questions

last year, has the government shifted its priority from reducing cigarette consumption to forcing people to stop eating breakfast?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please I am not sure what that supplementary is supplementary to.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC—NEGOTIATIONS ON ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE**

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has the government entered into negotiations with the German Democratic Republic with a view to establishing diplomatic relations and developing trade with that country?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE**INCREASE IN 1973-74 BUDGET—AVAILABILITY OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR CADET CORPS**

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Defence. Will the unfreezing of the defence budget be reflected in additional funds available to cadet corps across Canada whose members are no longer permitted to undertake familiarization flights?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Not specifically, Mr. Speaker. We are, of course, concerned about the cadet program—it is a major part of our work—but the unfreezing of the budget is not related directly to that program.

• (1440)

Mr. Korchinski: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Obviously hon. members are asking supplementaries that are not related to the last question. We must try to establish some order. The hon. member for Leeds.

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POST OFFICE**COLLECTION OF POSTAGE DUE ON CERTAIN LETTERS MAILED BY LIBERAL PARTY PRIOR TO ELECTION**

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Postmaster General. Did the minister's department succeed in collecting thousands of dollars of postage due because of insufficient postage being placed shortly before October 30, 1972, by the Liberal

[Mr. Paproski.]

party of Canada on imitation personal letters from the Prime Minister that were mailed to some 35 constituencies, including the constituency of Leeds?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That question should be placed on the order paper.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS**IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION THAT NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COUNCIL BE GIVEN GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING**

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Acting Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Would the acting minister tell the House when his department intends to implement the recommendation of a Northwest Territories task force that the housing responsibilities of the Northwest Territories Council be increased?

Mr. Len Marchand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am not the acting minister but I will take that question as notice. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has indicated in some public statements that by and large he agrees with the spirit of the task force report on housing issued by the Northwest Territories Council, though he had some reservations.

Mr. Nielsen: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon on a point of order.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, my point of order refers to the question just asked, relating as it does to a question of policy. It has been the practice, experience and tradition of this House that acting ministers are appointed to assume the responsibilities of ministers who are absent for lengthy periods or are ill. While we all regret the absence of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, there is ample precedent in this government for the appointment of acting ministers. For instance, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has acted on behalf of one of his colleagues in the past and similar examples can be given throughout the treasury benches. The parliamentary secretary, as able as he is, cannot answer questions calling for information about government policy; he is not a member of the cabinet and is not privy to their discussions. Surely we in the opposition are entitled to have an acting minister answer for the government on questions of policy.

[Later:]

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the Prime Minister, who indicated the other day, whether intentionally or not, that there was an Acting Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Would it be too much to ask that the House be told who the acting minister is?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I will do that very gladly, Mr. Speaker. The acting minister is the Minis-