

pension recipients. The Program is to be further expanded this year. I am pleased to report that over 1,000 veterans are now participating in the Aging Veterans Program. I intend to continue to expand that Program to other disability pensioners. We are in the process of examining ways and means whereby the Program could be extended to War Veterans Allowance recipients as well.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

REMOVAL OF WOOD CARVINGS FROM OFFICE OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Public Works whether he can shed any light on an unauthorized intrusion into the Office of the Leader of the Opposition in this building—my office lately—apparently by members of his Department. This has resulted in the removal of the wood carvings over the west and east entrances to the boardroom in my office, the one over the west door containing the words “Fear God”, and the one over the east door “Honour the King”. These wood carvings were apparently done during the time of the Liberal Prime Minister, the late Mackenzie King.

In view of the harmless and even commendable nature of those two sentiments, I wonder if the Minister can ascribe any reason, legitimate or otherwise, that the Office of the Leader of the Opposition should be subjected to such intrusion, surreptitiously, after dark, without any authority from me, without any knowledge by me or my staff, and without any request from me or my staff. Can he give us an explanation?

● (1500)

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I have listened to the Hon. Member. Although I cannot join him in the melodrama of his question, I will ascertain the facts, which is what he must expect me to do. If the facts are accurate, I will try to find an explanation and I will report back to the House.

Mr. Nielsen: I am not rising to make any attempt to be melodramatic. I must say that I am concerned about—

Miss Bégin: He should be concerning himself with unemployment and the economy.

Mr. Nielsen: I did not hear the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Miss Bégin: We are concerned about unemployment and the economy.

Mr. Nielsen: Yes, it is about time they got themselves concerned about the economy of this country. They have been sitting on their backsides for three years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Privilege—Mr. Nielsen

REQUEST FOR PRESERVATION OF MUNIMENTS

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): I am concerned, Madam Speaker, about the retention of the heritage features of these buildings. The Minister knows that millions of dollars were spent in doing just that, on the East Block. Will he have his workmen restore those carvings to their original state so that the heritage features of this building are not mutilated and debased any further? And will he give me assurance at the same time that the other murals and carvings in those offices will not be tampered with in any way whatsoever?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I take a back seat to no one in my efforts to preserve the heritage of these buildings. I only hope that the removal of objects was not done in search of some pseudo bugging equipment from some years ago.

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PETITION

MR. SKELLY—RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly) on Wednesday, April 20, met the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. NIELSEN—ALLEGED UNAUTHORIZED INTRUSION INTO OFFICES OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question of privilege, Madam Speaker, arising out of the Question Period. It has to do with the answers given to me by the Minister of Public Works (Mr. LeBlanc) in connection with—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: Hon. Members across the way make light of the fact that offices of Members of Parliament can be broken into without authority, without request, without knowledge, at any time by servants of the—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order. If that is not a continuation of Question Period, I do not know what is. We are on a question of privilege.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question of privilege involves the unauthorized intrusion into my offices in this building by the employees of the Minister of Public Works. The offices of a Member of Parliament, Madam