

Inquiries of the Ministry

with the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials. In view of the numerous requests by the Canadian people for the removal of the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials to be used in centennial projects, will the minister not give serious consideration to these worthy undertakings by the people and make it much easier for them to carry them out?

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered questions of this character, and I would not like to start repeating myself in the house.

LABOUR RELATIONS

MEETING OF MINISTER AND S.I.U. OFFICER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my question to the Minister of Labour, and it is in two parts. Did he have an interview yesterday with the right hand man of Hal Banks, Mr. Heinikey, and would he be prepared to tell the House of Commons what was the nature of the interview that took place in his office yesterday afternoon, I believe?

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did see Mr. Heinikey in my office for a few minutes yesterday afternoon, just as I attempt to see all representatives of trade unions.

Mr. Woolliams: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Was the question of election of officers of the S.I.U. discussed, and was that the purpose of the meeting between the minister and the man in question?

Mr. MacEachen: That was not the purpose, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Woolliams: Was there discussion in that regard?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

INQUIRY AS TO REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. S. J. Enns (Portage-Neepawa): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Justice having to do with a federal inquiry into juvenile delinquency which was set up in 1962. I ask this question on orders of the day because on November 20 last his parliamentary secretary indicated to the hon. mem-

ber for Saint John-Albert that a report could be expected in April 1964. I am wondering if the minister can now say whether the report of this important committee can be expected soon?

Hon. Guy Favreau (Minister of Justice): I shall be pleased to inquire of the members of the committee and report to the house as early as possible.

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

REFUSAL OF CERTIFICATES TO PROFESSED ATHEISTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. William Dean Howe (Hamilton South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for either the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration or the Minister of Justice. Can either minister now make a statement with regard to the refusal of citizenship to a professed atheist?

Hon. Guy Favreau (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, on this question as to whether citizenship has been refused because two applicants refused to take the oath, I must answer that in fact there has been no such refusal. In the case of Mr. and Mrs. Bergsma the court declined to recommend to the minister the granting of an application because the judge found that on all the facts of the case, inter alia the fact that the person concerned—and I do not care to discuss the decision—was an atheist, that person could not be found to be of a good character within the meaning of section 10 (1)(d) of the citizenship act. Therefore the question of oath really has not arisen, because the oath is taken only at the time the minister decides to grant citizenship upon the recommendation of the court.

However, in relation to a second question that was put in relation to the same matter, as to whether in those cases statutory affirmation instead of an oath may be taken, my answer is in the affirmative. It is my own view that even in the case of applications for citizenship an applicant may choose to make a solemn and statutory affirmation, instead of an oath on the Bible, with the same consequences. This is my interpretation of section 15 of the Canada Evidence Act, and I must report to the house that I have now so advised the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Mr. Howe (Hamilton South): As a supplementary question, as a result of this decision would the minister consider allowing the Bergsma case to be reviewed before the normal time, which involves a waiting period of more than a year?