

HOUSING

INQUIRY AS TO POSSIBLE REDRAFTING OF
AMENDING LEGISLATION

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the great concern expressed during the weekend, which received considerable publicity and which I feel the Prime Minister is aware of, by the former deputy prime minister, and the Prime Minister's statement on page 5525 of *Hansard* that "governments are to a large degree powerless" to deal with urban renewal, housing, urban transportation and pollution—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Hees: Here is the question: Is it the intention of the government to withdraw the National Housing Act for redrafting, disband the urban transportation unit of the Department of Transport and cancel consideration of a Canada water act or a clean air act?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Obviously not, Mr. Speaker. To say that governments are to a large degree powerless is to say that the constitution does impose certain limitations on both levels of government, but within their jurisdiction things can be done. Some of the examples quoted by the hon. member are things that have been done in these years. It means we cannot cover the area in its entirety without changing the constitution. Under the constitution as it now stands we have done these things. We are doing more in a bill now before the house. I am surprised the hon. member wishes us to withdraw these very progressive pieces of legislation.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has put in my mouth words I did not use. I would like to ask him a supplementary question. If the government intends to go forward with matters of this kind which are of great importance, would the Prime Minister then stop using the constitution as an excuse for inaction, as described by the former deputy prime minister?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Prime Minister may not want to reply to a question which is out of order.

SOCIAL SECURITY

POSSIBILITY OF LEGISLATION TO DECREASE
FAMILY ALLOWANCE AND OLD AGE
BENEFITS

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to

Inquiries of the Ministry

the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Does the government have any intention of introducing legislation to eliminate or cut back either the family allowance or old age security pensions?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): There is no government decision one way or another in respect to this matter. If there should be any intention on the part of the government in this regard, it will be announced as a matter of government policy.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister not in a position to assure us that, whatever else will be done in the field of social legislation, the means test will not be put back on either of these two pieces of legislation?

Mr. Speaker: It seems the hon. member is asking in different words the question he asked in the first instance.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Ten o'clock.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): May I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister? I wonder if he was just throwing up trial balloons when in his speech he talked about doing away with the baby bonus, or was he contradicting his Minister of National Health and Welfare?

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): My question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Could he tell the house whether the reduction or the increase of family allowances is being considered by the government?

Mr. Speaker: Again it appears to me that the hon. member is just asking a question that has already been raised.

[English]

OIL

DISCUSSION WITH ALBERTA PREMIER ON
NATIONAL POLICY

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Will he please tell the house the nature of the discussions he held with Premier Strom of Alberta on Friday? Was the Prime Minister able to indicate any progress in updating Canada's national oil policy, and specifically did he indicate to Premier Strom