

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Hees: There are no ministers over here yet, but just wait a few months.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I do not appreciate the Whip of the loyal opposition accusing ministers of not being in the House when they have been in the House quite frequently lately.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): While the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the New Democratic Party are on holidays, we are dealing with the business of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: May we have order, please. The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) has the floor. We have reached the period of oral questions.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

LEAKING OF CABINET DOCUMENTS—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON INVESTIGATION

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to demonstrate that the opposition will ask adequate questions. Hopefully, we will receive adequate replies. My question is for the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister able to give any better assurance than he has in the past that the investigations into the source and manner of cabinet leaks has reached the point where he can undertake that there will be no further leaks?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Of course, Mr. Speaker, I cannot commit the future conduct of any individual. I can re-assert that the government is making an investigation into each one of these leaks. I asked every one of my ministers to look carefully in their department. I told the House last week that with the tons of documents circulating in the government service which are available to so many people, as long as there are crooks and people who condone crooks, this kind of thing will be happening. I do not think the opposition should be complaining.

LEAKING OF CABINET DOCUMENTS—LEGISLATION TO GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): I wish to direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Justice. In order that we may have some assurance that something will be done to bring an end to these leaks, is the minister prepared to give an undertaking to the House that at the beginning of the next session he will introduce legislation with regard to freedom of information, a matter which he strongly advocated outside the House?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): There will be a lot of priorities for House time next session, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Speaker.]

LEAKING OF CABINET DOCUMENTS—POSSIBLE CLAIM FOR COPYRIGHT

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister seek advice from his colleagues with regard to the Copyright Act so that the government would be prepared to file a claim for copyright against the *Globe and Mail* when they publish these government documents?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid this would not only be a legal matter, but it would involve a much broader question of social impact. I think the government would have to consider not only the legal aspect of it, but all the other aspects.

CABINET COMMITTEE REPORT ON NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT—REASON FOR FAILURE TO PUBLISH

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): A supplementary question. Will the Prime Minister say what reason there can be for failing to publish as a white paper or table in the House the cabinet committee report on a policy for northern development in the next decade, so that the public and this Parliament can know and discuss this important policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the public and the opposition want to take cognizance of everything the government is doing when it is establishing goals and so on, we think this would be a very welcome step. You just have to listen to speeches of ministers, statements made by the ministry and the policies we adopt to realize what our general goals are and what objectives this government is trying to pursue. All the time there are documents within cabinet to establish, generally speaking, the goals and objectives of this government. We do not publish all of them. We publish the policy positions and the programs which flow from these objectives. We do have guidelines, and we hope the opposition also have some.

Mr. Brewin: A supplementary question. May I ask the Prime Minister the reason for keeping secret this particular document which is of such great importance.

Mr. Trudeau: There is no reason, Mr. Speaker. I repeat, this particular document and probably dozens and dozens of other documents are of very great interest. I hope some way will be found to make them known to the Canadian public so that they will know.

An hon. Member: Isn't that lovely?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, isn't that lovely. I am glad I have the support of the lovely member over there.

LEAKING OF CABINET DOCUMENTS—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION BY ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): A supplementary question. Since there have been no less than six leaks in the past six weeks, and since it appears the government has got nowhere in its investigation, I ask the Prime Minister whether the RCMP is investigating this