

Mr. Pepin: I just said I would, Mr. Speaker.

ESTATE TAX ACT

REQUEST THAT EXPLANATORY MATERIAL BE SUPPLIED TO OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Mr. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. It is based on a newspaper account which might be accurate, but I do not propose to call for any files.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fairweather: Could opposition members of parliament be furnished with the explanation with regard to the new estate tax, which was allegedly given by the Department of Finance to backbenchers who support the government?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the explanation was not given by the Department of Finance but through my office. Yesterday I instructed my office to make it available to members in the opposition as some of them have requested.

Mr. Bell: Is it helpful?

Mr. Benson: It is very helpful and it shows how fair the estate tax is.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lewis: Then why did you delay supplying us with the explanation?

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SECURITY CHECK OF STAFF MEMBERS

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the government house leader because I do not know to whom else it should be directed. Would the government house leader be kind enough to advise the house now or later as to the procedure with regard to security checks on the staff employed by the House of Commons and Senate. I ask the question in view of the fact that there was this morning some kind of security check. It amazes me that secretaries who have been here as long as 16 years were stopped for a security check, when to my personal knowledge three new employees who were right ahead of me were not stopped for this check.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad

Inquiries of the Ministry

to obtain from the hon. member the details of the particular case referred to. I would then make further inquiries and consult my colleagues on the point.

Mr. Baldwin: Has there been another leak?

HARBOURS

NOVA SCOTIA—ACTION FOLLOWING SURVEY OF STORM DAMAGE

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works. On December 9 the minister stated that the Atlantic region engineers were making a survey of possible storm damage as far as harbours are concerned. Would the minister advise the house whether the engineers have completed their survey and whether any action will be taken?

Hon. Arthur Laing (Minister of Public Works): We have a report, Mr. Speaker, that is fairly complete with regard to damage done by the storm in all areas. The damage was very widespread, however, and I think the information that we have could probably be disseminated to individual members with more value than by making a statement in the house. I will endeavour to get that information out at once to the members concerned.

SPACE EXPLORATION

CONGRATULATIONS TO RUSSIAN COSMONAUTS

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Transport a question in his capacity as Acting Prime Minister. Will consideration be given to extending Canada's congratulations to the U.S.S.R. on the completion today of an outstanding space achievement by that country?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all Canadians wish to congratulate the Russian cosmonauts on this really remarkable achievement. It is a further step in the exploration of space which lends new knowledge to that field of endeavour. It is a matter of interest and concern to all citizens of the world. I think that with the United States astronauts who performed such an amazing feat at the Christmas period, the Russian team deserve the congratulations and best wishes of all interested citizens of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.