

Inquiries of the Ministry

report on the matter. The officials of my department as well as those of the Auditor General's office are at present on the reservation. They will submit this report to me shortly but they have not yet completed their inquiry.

[English]

Mr. Baldwin: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that one of the allegations is that officials of the department persuaded the band council to sign blank resolutions and then filled them out as they saw fit—most improperly—would the minister not facilitate an inquiry into this matter by a parliamentary committee?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Before making a decision on that subject, Mr. Speaker, I am waiting to read the report of officials of my department who are to study this aspect of the question.

[English]

LABOUR RELATIONS**PROSPECTIVE STRIKE BY BELL CANADA
FEMALE EMPLOYEES**

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. What steps is the minister's department taking in an effort to head off a strike by female employees of Bell Canada in Quebec and Ontario?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, there are many steps still to be proceeded with before a strike could take effect; for example, there is the conciliation board stage. I am very hopeful that there will be no strike within Bell by the female operators.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister referred to a conciliation board. In view of the fact that there have already been indications of a serious slowdown in telephone service, when will a decision be made regarding the appointment of a conciliation board?

Mr. Mackasey: As soon as possible, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member knows that both parties have the right to name people to the board, and I have been waiting to hear from them. The last word I had was that it was hoped that a settlement would be arrived at before a strike became necessary.

[Mr. Chrétien.]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL SALES TAX TO
AID DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Bruce Howard (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Is the government giving favourable consideration to a United Nations proposal that an international sales tax of one half per cent for development aid be applied on some luxury goods in Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have some doubt whether this question is in order. I am not sure whether it is a matter of urgency, but perhaps the minister might have a quick reply.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is enough difficulty applying taxes in Canada for the Canadian Government—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: —for this government just as much as for all governments in Canada in the past, that it seems to me it would be very difficult to get universal acceptance for the idea of a world government applying another tax.

TAXATION**WHITE PAPER ON REFORM—CHANGES BEFORE
PRESENTATION OF BUDGET**

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Finance. Is it his intention to announce any changes or amendments to the white paper on tax reform before the budget is presented on March 12?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend will just have to wait and see.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON REFUGEES**

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The minister may remember that I gave him notice of it. Has he considered the request made in a recent speech by the Israeli foreign minister urging that an international conference on refugees be convened; and has