

Inquiries of the Ministry

urban areas will be made on three Saturdays in December and will cost \$350,000 per day, will the Minister of Finance tell the House whether it is a fact that failure to provide letter carrier delivery on the other 49 Saturdays in the year will save the treasury \$17,150,000?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question as asked is not in order.

POLLUTION

THREAT FROM BREAKING UP OF TANKER

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member for St. John's East asked me whether or not the break-up, as he termed it, of a loaded tanker off the coast of New England posed a pollution threat to Canada. I investigated the matter immediately and found that this disaster happened southeast of Nantucket, several hundred miles south of Canada's shoreline. The best information of the scientists is that the normal tides and currents will dissipate any pollution and there will be no threat to Canadian shores as a result of this disaster.

HOUSING

URBAN RENEWAL—INQUIRY AS TO REMOVAL OF FREEZE

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the minister in charge of housing. It arises from his statement in response to a question on October 28 as to when there would be a removal of the freeze on urban renewal. He said at that time that if the Leader of the Opposition would try to be patient he would try to make a statement during the next few days. In British Columbia we are not used to such long periods of freezing, and I should like to ask the minister when this statement will be made and when the next few days will be over.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio): Soon, Mr. Speaker.

PUBLIC SERVICE

DELAY IN ISSUING RETROACTIVE PAY CHEQUES

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board in an attempt to assist him in making

some of the constituents of the Solicitor General happy this weekend. Has the President of the Treasury Board received a lawyer's letter about the delay in payment of retroactive wages to civil servants, and what action does he plan to relieve the hardship to many people?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I did receive a letter from the legal representative of the Professional Institute of the Public Service. It has been forwarded to the law officers of the Crown for advice. I should point out that we have been taking and are continuing to take massive action to try to overcome the very large problem created by this backlog of retroactive pay. As I indicated to the House before, in each individual case of reconciliation of accounts going back to July 1, 1967 there is a great deal of clerical work required in the departments and in the Central Pay Office. It is this complicated one-time operation we are trying to get over.

Mr. Bell: May I ask the President of the Treasury Board what he thinks of a meeting on this matter with the legal officer such as has been suggested?

Mr. Drury: Highly.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

PLACING OF SERVICEMEN'S GROUP INSURANCE WITH U.S. ACQUIRED CANADIAN COMPANY

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Last Friday I asked the Minister of Finance a question concerning a report that life insurance coverage for the Canadian Armed Forces to the value of between \$1 billion and \$2 billion had been acquired by a non-Canadian company. I trust the minister will have his reply available today.

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): I have taken up this matter with the Minister of National Defence. He is to supply me with information in this regard. It is not, as I understand it, a matter of the government being engaged in giving insurance to this company but rather it is a matter of the employees carrying additional insurance through the company. The Minister of National Defence is looking into the matter.