

Inquiries of the Ministry

It is obvious that the widest possible discussion on last year's program and the forms that the employment program for youth should take next summer must be favoured. We have received some proposals, timid, I must say, calling for a conference to be held at the national level and this is a suggestion that we are going to consider.

[English]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I wonder if the Minister can give any indication whether proposals will be favourably received with regard to such a conference and, in particular, with regard to some of the recommendations that have been consistently made? Has a secretariat now been organized to begin planning for next summer with a view particularly to decentralizing the program into the various regions of the country?

[Translation]

Mr. Pelletier: To the hon. member's last two questions, Mr. Speaker, I can give an affirmative answer. There is an active secretariat and decentralization plans have been drawn up.

* * *

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**POSSIBLE CONFLICT BETWEEN REGULATIONS UNDER ACT AND NATIONAL REVENUE REGULATIONS**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour as a result of some very peculiar circumstances recently revealed by the Real Estate Association of Canada. Has the Department of National Revenue drafted a set of regulations contrary to those drafted by the minister's department and, if so, can the minister inform the House which set of regulations takes precedence?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am not unaware of the representations of this particular group which would prefer to be included under the coverage of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. As a result of their brief I have asked my officials to meet with the Department of National Revenue in order to make certain that if there is any ambiguity or contradiction in the regulations it will be clarified immediately.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer but what I am trying to ascertain is whether the Department of National Revenue, because of its position with respect to the Unemployment Insurance Commission, is also drafting regulations or has drafted regulations contrary to the regulations being drafted by the minister's department. If that is so, I should like to know which regulations take precedence and which department in fact sets policy for the Unemployment Insurance Act?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, we set policy for the Unemployment Insurance Act. From January 1 next the Department of National Revenue will have the responsibility of collecting the weekly contributions of employees on behalf of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. There may be some confusion as to what an "employee" [Mr. Pelletier.]

is. It is not a question of precedence; it is a question of making sure that the regulations are uniform.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Alexander: One further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member for Joliette will bear with the Chair for a moment. I will allow the hon. member for Hamilton West a second supplementary and then go to the hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I am still asking the minister a very simple question and for some reason or other he is debating the matter. I should like to know whether the Department of National Revenue is preparing regulations which are contrary to regulations being prepared by the minister's department. That is a simple question. Is there any co-ordination between these two departments or are two sets of regulations being drafted at the same time, each unknown to the other department?

Mr. Mackasey: I said in answer to the original question that I had asked my officials to make sure that, even unintentionally, regulations of the Department of National Revenue were not in some way contradictory to those of my department. I want to remove this confusion and make sure that the regulations are uniform.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette.

[Translation]

EXEMPTION DECREED BY QUEBEC FOR SCHOOL BOARD AND HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour.

Considering that the minister in charge of Quebec civil servants stated yesterday that his government had took it upon itself to define the exception provided in section 3(3) of the Unemployment Insurance Act so that Quebec school board and hospital employees would be covered, and that the decision was taken because the federal legislation did not provide a clear definition, would the minister tell us if he intends to make that legislation more specific?

[English]

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, several provinces have asked me to clarify section 3(2)(e) of the act with reference to "excepted employees". The minister in Quebec responsible for the civil service, in the absence of regulations, has included school teachers and hospital workers as civil servants. In order to remove any ambiguity and confusion the Governor in Council at my suggestion has amended the unemployment insurance regulations, in particular section 49(2), to clarify in the clearest possible terms those classes of employees to be included in the provincial option—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I assume the minister has replied to the question asked by the hon. member. Unless he wishes to revert to motions, I do not think the explanation should be pursued further.