

Oral Questions

of Regional Economic Expansion. They may reply to you, because they do not reply to us.

I wonder if you would ask the hon. gentlemen whether, prior to the introduction of the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act, either of them requested or initiated particular or specific studies with respect to the impact of those amendments on the economies of Quebec and the four Atlantic provinces; and, if so, may we have the results of those special studies?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member, I must assure him that all the provisions of the bill were carefully examined and their impact on various parts of Canada were understood.

I am not aware of any specialized studies, but I believe all the information that would be required in order to make a decision was available to the government.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I see that you are no more competent than we are in extracting information. May I direct a question to the Deputy Prime Minister and be more specific about it?

The Deputy Prime Minister indicated to the House that he allowed to go forward, from his position of influence in the Government of Canada, the amendments that are presently before us—the tinkering with UIC on the backs of the poorer regions of this country—without having required or requested information that would lead him to a clear understanding of the very serious impact which, it is now obvious, these changes will have, particularly on eastern Canada. Is that the position?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, what I said was the very opposite of the conclusion the hon. member has drawn. I said that all the information necessary to reach conclusions and understand the impact on the various regions of Canada was available. What I said, also, was that I was not aware of any specialized studies on the subject, but that seems to be immaterial if the necessary information was available.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

EFFECT OF BILL C-14 ON LEGISLATION

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In view of the fact that Bill C-14 has not yet been passed and there is total confusion among the larger employers of Canada because of this, can the minister indicate why his officials are now instructing employers how to administer a regulation which, in effect, is still before the House?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the regulation is not before the House. It was passed under the present

[Mr. Forrestall.]

legislation: As is always the case, it was gazetted one month ago: I believe the date quoted today was November 8.

Invariably, at the end of the year, before all the facts and figures are in—as every employer who deals with computers knows—there will be a rush. The Department of Supply and Services knows that and the Department of National Revenue knows that: They need figures in order to prepare their tables. The regulation that was passed was legal; it was passed under the present legislation; it was gazetted in the normal way and became public information as recently as November 8. To some extent, the information was possibly available to others prior to that time.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, may I put my supplementary question to the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council, in his role as government House leader?

This regulation was gazetted on November 8, it was discussed by cabinet on October 20 and the bill received first reading only on November 2—although we have now been sitting for a month. We are now in the invidious position that if the bill does not pass and parliament excludes that part of it, namely, clause 2, on January 1, despite what parliament says the regulation will still be in effect. Can we have the assurance from the Deputy Prime Minister that should parliament so decide, that regulation will be withdrawn?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be unwise to anticipate the judgment of parliament. I simply say that when the reality which the hon. member now hypothesizes comes about, we will consider it.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

REQUEST WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCES NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BECAUSE OF INCREASES IN OTHER BENEFITS

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I address a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs?

A few weeks ago the minister indicated in the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs that he was in favour of the necessary steps being taken so that war veterans allowance recipients who receive increases in their old age pension supplements in January or increases in their family allowance in 1979 will not have these increases cut off their war veterans allowance.

I ask the minister if he is now in a position to assure the House that these steps are being taken; and, if not, can he assure the House that he will do his best to get Treasury Board to allow him to make that statement before Christmas?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has indicated, I made remarks previously to this effect, and they are still in effect. I