

Inquiries of the Ministry

urgency. It could be answered simply by a "yes" or "no".

Mr. Speaker: If the minister wishes to answer "yes" or "no" I might allow the question.

WOMEN

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING
PRESENTATION OF ROYAL COMMISSION
REPORT

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State or the appropriate minister. Could the hon. gentleman advise the house when the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women will be available? It appears to me that although spokesmen for many women throughout the country have given some indication of the existing inequalities which affect their lives, the evidence includes many submissions which affect all facets of Canadian life involving men, women and children.

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to inquire into this matter and report to the house.

COMMUNICATIONS

BRIEFS IN OPPOSITION TO BELL TELEPHONE
RATES INCREASE

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): May I take this opportunity to reply to a question asked on Friday by the hon. member for Broadview. I think I should state the following on behalf of the Postmaster General, who is still indisposed.

No brief, by or on behalf of the government, has been filed with the Canadian Transport Commission in connection with Bell Canada's application for approval of certain tariff adjustments. The commission is a quasi-judicial body with the power to make decisions on applications of this nature, pursuant to legislation passed by this parliament. In making its decisions the commission is obliged to ensure that all tolls shall be just and reasonable, and has the power to obtain such information as it deems necessary for these purposes.

It is my understanding that several parties have filed briefs in opposition to the Bell application and that these parties may be heard as well as the company.

Beyond this, the Governor in Council has specific optional powers and responsibilities provided for in legislation. These powers

[Mr. McCleave.]

include the ability to vary the commission's decisions and to handle appeals. If, after the commission has determined this particular case, it should develop that government initiative is desirable, hon. members can rest assured it will be fully considered and appropriate action taken.

ATLANTIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

REQUEST FOR NAME OF NEW CHAIRMAN

Mr. Melvin McQuaid (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister of the Crown who answers to parliament for the operation of the Atlantic Development Board. In view of the fact that the term of office of the present chairman of the board expires on Friday of this week, and since under the act he is not eligible for reappointment, can the minister tell the house whether a decision has been made with regard to a new appointment and, if so, who the new chairman is to be?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Forestry and Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, no one has been appointed to replace him. That matter will be discussed at the cabinet meeting this week.

[English]

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

POSSIBILITY OF DROPPING REGIONAL
DESK SYSTEM

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, now that the Prime Minister has returned from his far-flung foreign adventures, is it his intention to drop the regional desk system which has been described by one Liberal backbencher as a high class patronage system?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Paproski: May I ask what is wrong with that question, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: I can see many things wrong with that question. First of all, I do not think the hon. member is referring to a matter which is under the administrative responsibility of the Prime Minister. I have serious doubts about its being in order. However, if the hon. member thinks it is urgent and wishes to attempt to place it on the order paper, I might have a closer look at it then.