

report. If I may take his question as notice, I will bring it to the attention of the Minister of Transport. I know he will deal with it.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER EXCISE TAX WILL BE REPEALED FOR
TRANSPORT COMMISSION IN MONTREAL SOUTH SHORE

Mr. Pierre Deniger (Laprairie): In view of the absence of the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and their respective parliamentary secretaries, I shall direct my question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. In view of the difficulties which Canada may face during the coming winter to get the necessary supply of energy, and in view of hon. members' support for mass transit systems, could the minister advise the House whether his budget will provide for the repeal of the excise tax for companies involved in mass transit systems, such as the transport commission in Montreal South Shore?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, in view of the absence of the Leader of the Opposition and many other front bench critics opposite, I am pleased to answer the hon. gentleman by telling him that because of budget secrecy I cannot say what will be abolished or done in the budget. But mass transit is a subject dear to our hearts on this side of the House. Certainly, we will be considering very carefully the needs of urban mass transit users and mass transit systems.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

COMPOSITION OF PARLIAMENTARY TASK FORCE

Mr. Ed Lumley (Stormont-Dundas): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue with respect to the so-called parliamentary task force which includes only Conservative members of Parliament. While acknowledging the dedicated effort of the individual members concerned, would the President of the Privy Council assure the House that in future parliamentary task forces will include members from both sides of the House, from all parties?

Hon. Walter Baker (President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy the hon. member raised that question. It has been my view—and I know it is the view shared by the Prime Minister—that for too long the talent which exists on the benches on all sides of the House of Commons really has been underutilized. We adopted as an experiment the procedure to which the hon. member refers.

I have no objection whatsoever to considering that kind of task force involving all members of the House of Commons. There are many issues which could be considered respecting

the operation of government that really are not partisan and that could engage properly the attention of members on all sides of the House of Commons. I certainly agree with the representation contained in the question.

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CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENTS TO ABORTION LAWS

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue. It arises out of questions before the House yesterday having to do with amendments to the Criminal Code on the question of the abortion laws. Would the President of the Privy Council consider, together with other House leaders, the advisability of referring the subject matter of the eight or ten bills on this subject, which presently are standing on the order paper in private members' names, to an appropriate standing committee so that the matter might be looked into?

Hon. Walter Baker (President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, it is a most unusual request in terms of the subject matter, but since the hon. member couched it on the basis that I would discuss it with other House leaders, certainly I undertake to discuss it with other House leaders.

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STATISTICS CANADA

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND POLICIES OF CROWN CORPORATION

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. It has to do with the concern expressed in the House by hon. members on this side based on allegations about Statistics Canada of which he is aware. The inferences are rather serious, most particularly in terms of the confidence or the clouded confidence cast upon the economic information base on which most important decisions in cabinet are to be taken.

The President of the Treasury Board, based on our recommendations and his own views, indicated that he will consider—and, in fact, I think go further—and will have a management consultant firm look at Statistics Canada, more particularly with regard to personnel, administrative practices and policies. Would the President of the Treasury Board confirm now in the House that he will extend that and accept the recommendation that he will address himself to the more fundamental problem and include in some way in that examination, which should be public, experts on methodology of economic analysis, collection, collating and interpretation, so that the real problem of lack of confidence in the information base will be removed, for the sake of Statistics Canada and all those who depend upon that information?