

Oral Questions

Mr. Beatty: My supplementary question would obviously be for the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the fact that in its very excellent report the Privacy and Computers Commission back in 1972 recommended against the government forging ahead with the use of SIN as the single identification number, and in view of the fact that the tax department is now requiring that individuals cashing their Canada savings bonds premiums take out their SIN, may I ask the minister whether the government is reconsidering its policy and whether in the name of security it is prepared to require that departments not use SIN as a coding number for personal files in its computer files?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would take that as a representation. I am not sure whether all the implications in the hon. member's preamble to the question are in fact correct. We will look at that matter.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT ACT

DATE OF APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Privy Council. Further to my questions of October 19 and October 25 and the statement of the President of the Privy Council to the House on February 4 of this year, can the minister state whether or not a chairman has been appointed to the special committee to review the Public Service Employment Act? If so, does the special committee intend to hold public hearings, and if it does so intend, when will they be held?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the selection of the chairman for the review has not yet taken place, but a suitable person has been identified and discussions are underway now as to the availability of that person to serve.

* * *

ENERGY

HOME INSULATION PROGRAM—POSSIBILITY OF RECONSIDERATION IN CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I understand that there is to be a meeting of the federal minister with the ten provincial ministers on December 1 to discuss energy matters and I also understand that eight provinces, the provinces other than Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island which are dissatisfied with the present discriminatory home insulation program, are putting forward a new program. Is the minister prepared to consider their proposal, if it is not more expensive, during the present fiscal year rather than the present disjointed and discriminatory program?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I think that the program has been very well received. I am not saying that it cannot be improved. My colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, has indicated that there are particular changes that we might be prepared to contemplate. Before accepting the suggestion or the representation of the hon. member that we adopt the position of the provinces, I think the provinces should make their position clear to me. They have not done so yet.

PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERIM JOINT BOARD TO MANAGE OFFSHORE RESOURCES OF NEWFOUNDLAND—CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCE

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): At the meeting of the energy ministers on December 1, will the minister be discussing with the minister from Newfoundland his suggestion, sent to the minister on November 3 about which the minister knew nothing yesterday, that an interim federal Newfoundland management board be set up on the matter of the jurisdiction over offshore oil and gas before it goes to the Supreme Court of Canada? Will that be discussed by the minister?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that I am prepared to consider the joint management structure which was outlined in very general terms. A meeting has been set up and that meeting will follow the federal-provincial ministers' meeting. I would expect it to take place the following day.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

DELAY IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH NURSES IN INUVIK AREA—REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board. It concerns the nurses who are members of the Professional Institute of the Public Service. They are working in the Inuvik zone of the Northwest Territories. These people have been providing an essential service, at times in harsh conditions and for long hours, and have been without a contract since December 28, 1976. I should like to ask the minister what steps he is taking to ensure that a new contract is signed as soon as possible.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that this negotiation has taken so long. The consultations with the Professional Institute of the Public Service have been going on since January. The difficulty relates to the question of designation under section 79(2) of the Public Service Staff Relations Act as to just which of the employees should be designated as those who should remain on the job in the interest of the public during a strike such as a strike by the nurses. It was referred to the Staff Relations Board on November 4 and hearings are going on now. There