

leadership. Despite the generous offer of his services, his services were found not to be needed by the delegates, so now he is back in the House of Commons.

During the course of his campaign, he emphasized that:

British Columbia . . . is receiving a disproportionately small share of federal contracts.

He added, "They are being shortchanged by my government."

I would like to ask the Leader of the Government whether he has discussed with his colleague from British Columbia the ways in which British Columbia apparently is being shortchanged by this government. Second, I want to ask the Leader of the Government this question: The new Premier of British Columbia, Mr. Vander Zalm, has stated that despite the fact that British Columbia is the third largest province in Canada, only 3 per cent of federal government procurement is undertaken in the province of British Columbia. He said that that number has declined by 3 per cent under this government.

I would like to know whether that figure is accepted by your government or is challenged by your government, and, if it is challenged, what is the correct figure?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, as the former leader of the Liberal Party in British Columbia will know, there is now an election under way in that province and I would not like to be drawn into the election rhetoric there.

As for the statements that he attributes to Mr. Wenman, the member of Parliament, and to Premier Vander Zalm, I must admit that I have not seen those statements. I would have to look at them to try to verify, if possible, the information and the statistics that have been used. Otherwise, I do not think it would be prudent for me to comment at this time.

JUSTICE

CANADA COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON WAR CRIMINALS—STATUS

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: Honourable senators, I would like to ask a question of the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Last summer the government extended to the end of September the mandate of the Deschênes commission of inquiry into the possibility that Nazi war criminals are residing in Canada. Can the Leader of the Government tell us whether the government has been given this report of the Deschênes commission, or has its mandate been extended again?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I believe there was an announcement from the honourable Minister of Justice or from the Prime Minister within the last day or two to the effect that the Deschênes commission has been given an extension until the end of November.

An Hon. Senator: Six weeks.

Senator Murray: I beg your pardon, six weeks, in any case, to complete its work. This is not a question of further public hearings but a matter of preparing the report.

Senator Haidasz: Can the Leader of the Government assure us that this is the last extension, because it has received three or four such extensions and many Canadians are already concerned and are having doubts about the work of this commission.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, we hope, expect and believe we have an undertaking from the commission that this is the last extension and that the final report will be in on the new due date.

IMMIGRATION

REFUGEE STATUS—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: I have another question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. News reached the west this morning that there are 600 buses carrying about 29,000 refugees from Iran moving towards Western Europe. I would like to know whether the government is apprised of this development and whether we can expect some type of clear announcement about Canada's true policy on refugees and the prevention of abuses before receiving the comprehensive legislation on refugee determination which was promised yesterday in the Speech from the Throne.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): I will have inquiries made of the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

THE ENVIRONMENT

DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Hon. Andrew Thompson: Honourable senators, I would like to ask the Leader of the Government a question. Before doing so, I wish, as others have done, to offer my sincere congratulations to him. He has certainly set his stamp in the Senate as he has in other areas, and we recognize his formidable talents.

At the same time, I would like to pay my respects to the former leader, as I did when I was a very young man out in Manitoba and saw him perform. I think he made a great contribution while he was leader in the Senate.

I am prompted to ask my question because of the Speech from the Throne and the reference to a "new Environmental Protection Act." I hope you will indulge me by permitting me to make a little preamble to my question.

Canada is like all the other industrial nations which are using nuclear power, and it is grappling with the awesome problem of establishing a permanent site for both low-level and high-level radioactive waste. I use the word "awesome", because no level of radioactivity—natural or man made—has been established as being safe and because scientists define "permanent" as ensuring safety for human health in the environment for the next 10,000 years.