

would surprise many union leaders that they have been under surveillance for some time." I want to ask the Solicitor General whether these many trade union leaders referred to by the Minister of Labour have been under surveillance for some time and, if so, why?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants any "éclaircissement" as to what the Minister of Labour wanted to say, I think he should ask the Minister of Labour. Our position has always been quite clear. There is, of course, surveillance of individuals in this country who may constitute a threat to national security, but legitimate political parties or trade unions in this country are not the object of systematic surveillance. If the hon. member opposite believes you should set up a group of preferred Canadians such as those in trade unions and political parties who are not subject to any kind of surveillance even if they constitute a threat to national security, I do not believe that argument would stand.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NATIONAL HEALTH

AVAILABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL MEDICAL FILES TO SECURITY SERVICE—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE CONFIDENTIALITY MAINTAINED

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It is in the public interest as well as in the interest of individual Canadians that their medical files be kept absolutely confidential. I interpreted the Solicitor General as saying that there was cooperation by the insurance plan authorities with the Security Service in providing these confidential documents to the Security Service. I would ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare whether this information was passed on by insurance plan authorities to the security services with her knowledge and consent. If it was not with her knowledge and consent—I realize she has not been in her portfolio for too long—was it with the knowledge and consent of her predecessor?

● (1442)

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am just thinking of the expression "red herring" which describes exactly what the hon. member is now trying to do. Last week was spent making interpretations of interpretations. I think I am going to be forced to go back to Carleton University to give a conference to which I shall invite the hon. member.

[English]

Mr. Yewchuk: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It appears to me that once again the minister has failed to match up her answer with the question that was put to her. I should

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like to ask her this. In view of the fact that confidential medical records are of great importance to individual Canadians from the point of view that they must be assured that private medical information is kept confidential by the people who receive it, can she assure the House that she, as national health and welfare minister, will immediately take steps to determine how this kind of information is getting out to the security services, and will she inform the House what she plans to do about ensuring that such an occurrence can never happen again?

[Translation]

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, I cannot add anything for the House during the oral question period, because the objective is to inform the Canadian people and not to make unfounded innuendos; I cannot answer anything else to a question which does not concern me but which concerns perhaps the provincial hospital administration. As far as a federal minister of health in Canada is concerned, everybody knows that he follows the policy established by professional medical associations; namely the confidentiality of patient files.

[English]

PROPOSED CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEDICAL FILES

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I am very much aware of the fact that medicare schemes are administered by the provinces. I am also aware of the fact that there is some federal participation and that the federal government has certain guidelines which the provinces must follow. I would ask the minister, on behalf of the people of Canada, to consult with the health ministers of each of the provinces to determine what security measures they take and to see whether they are adequate to ensure that confidential information on people's health is indeed kept confidential.

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to ask my predecessor if the matter was raised during federal-provincial ministerial meetings and consider the relevancy of the suggestion.

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[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

URANIUM CARTEL REGULATIONS—INSTRUCTIONS TO FEDERAL COUNSEL IN COURT CASE

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice; I would not want him to feel that the Solicitor General has taken over the administration of justice. In the instructions which were given to counsel on behalf of the government in connection with the application or motion made by the Leader of the Opposition and other members of parliament, was it suggested that the Bill of Rights should not be permitted to be con-