

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Since the menu for the coming session has been set out very completely in the speech from the throne, it is not my expectation there will be legislation at this session to deal with any aspect of the Canada Elections Act. Of course I would be delighted to have the hon. member's views on that or any other aspect of this subject.

Mr. Lewis: Will the minister inform the house whether there is a task force studying the committee report, or whether the committee's report will be referred to a committee of this house so that action on it may be taken soon? We have had the report for a few years.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): This question is, of course, under active review.

FISHERIESDISCUSSIONS RESPECTING ASSISTANCE
FOR ATLANTIC PROVINCES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Fisheries, and I preface my question with congratulations on his appointment to this position. Would the minister inform the house now, or as soon as convenient, about the progress made in his talks with the fisheries ministers of the Atlantic provinces concerning the serious situation in the east coast fishing industry, and the course of action planned by the government to assist this important primary industry?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): First I should like to thank the hon. member for his congratulatory remarks. Second, I should like to say that the problems of the east coast fisheries are under review. The purpose of my meeting with the fisheries ministers of the Atlantic region was to do just that, review these problems. As soon as there is a statement to be made on policy it will be made in the house.

Mr. Crouse: In view of the serious marketing problems in the fishing industry, when can we expect a preliminary report on the in depth market research study which is being financed by the federal and provincial governments and the industry?

Mr. Davis: I hope we can have a preliminary report early next year. I understand a full and final report is scheduled for early 1970.

[Mr. Lewis.]

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENTPAYMENT UNDER CONTRACTS FOR PERIOD
OF STRIKE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Perth): I should like to direct a question to the Postmaster General. As the result of a certain amount of uncertainty or lack of clarity in answers concerning rural mail carriers on Friday, I wonder if the minister would mind making a statement on motions in the near future outlining the exact position of the rural mail carriers and the legal support the government has for the position it has taken.

Hon. Eric Kierans (Postmaster General): I am preparing a letter for all members of the house outlining our position.

Mr. Monteith: Is this going to be mailed to all members or will there be a statement on motions?

An hon. Member: By rural mail.

Mr. Kierans: I am addressing a letter to all members of the house explaining our position with regard to rural contracts in particular.

Mr. Monteith: When will that be forthcoming?

Mr. Kierans: I looked at the draft on Friday, and it will be going out soon.

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): Will the Postmaster General also consider providing information in this statement concerning the closing of post offices and the cancellation of rural routes which is being carried out by his department at the present time? Will he give assurance to the house that the service now available to rural people will be maintained?

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Speaker, we are going through a normal reorganization of the services provided by the post office. It is true that we are closing down some revenue offices, but we are supplying in their place rural services that will be better. The revenue offices that we are currently considering closing are obviously those that are running at a considerable deficit and have no economic justification whatsoever.

Mr. Coates: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Postmaster General advise whether he considers as normal the closing of three post offices and two rural routes in a very small area?