

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it would take more than a short answer at this time to outline government policy in this respect. It has been the policy to introduce some decentralization. For example, this is evident in the fact that some government offices are being moved to Hull. There may be other occasions when it would still be consonant with efficiency of government operation, which I think must be the first consideration, to locate some of our agencies outside of this area.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Acting Prime Minister say whether the Solicitor General or the Minister of Justice is actually in charge of patronage in the Ottawa area?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question. May I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the Minister of Justice was stating government policy when he said that the national capital is the national capital and cannot be subdivided nationally? In addition, was the Minister of Supply and Services stating government policy when he said that the movement of certain offices and government agencies now established in the national capital to other parts of the country was actively under consideration?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Leader of the Opposition is perfectly well aware that there are many government agencies located outside this area. One example is the National Film Board which is in Montreal. This is not at all extraordinary.

Mr. Stanfield: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister was in relation to the movement out of Ottawa of agencies now established here.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, the example I gave is one where a national agency was moved to a place outside Ottawa, and it was not thought that this changed the capital of Canada, which is Ottawa.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not sure we are going to achieve anything by allowing a series of supplementaries inasmuch as we have now embarked upon a debate. However, I will recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre on a supplementary.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Supply and Services a direct question: Is consideration being given to moving the Mint to Manitoba?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, there is always some speculation about moving government agencies and departments, but no recommendation is before the cabinet at the present time in regard to moving the Mint.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Acting Prime Minister. Is the head office of the Cape Breton Development Corporation being moved from Ottawa to Cape Breton, where it is supposed to be doing its work?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I have not had any information about this, and so far as I know no recent decisions have been made in this regard.

Mr. Speaker: I again express reservations about the line of questioning upon which we are embarking. We have had many questions about moving many departments to many cities and towns across the country, from Victoria to Cornwall and from St. John's to Cornwall. We might pass on now to another subject.

[Later:]

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, there was a question earlier to which I never had an opportunity to ask a supplementary. I would appreciate it if I could have the opportunity now of presenting that supplementary.

In view of the Prime Minister's studies of economic isolation on the prairies and in view of the fact that the west must be given a sense of participation in Canada and must share in the economic benefits of Confederation if it is to overcome its feeling of alienation, will the government consider establishing the Mint in Edmonton—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not a related question; it is a related speech.

VITAL STATISTICS**BIRTHS—REQUESTED EXPLANATION
OF 1968 FIGURES**

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, this is a new subject. I shall address my question to the Minister of