

*Oral Questions*

because of his posting to Moscow. The RCMP does not ask CBC correspondents to become information gatherers on their behalf. The responsibility of the RCMP as far as intelligence operations are concerned is limited to intelligence operations in Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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**ENERGY****FUNDY TIDAL POWER PROJECT—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON WORK OF REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Is the minister in a position to tell the House whether he has intensified the investigation being carried out by the Fundy Tidal Power Review Committee with a view to the production of a final report on that committee's work before the end of 1977?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** I am not in a position to give a precise answer to that question at the present time but I hope to be very shortly. Most of the work on phase one has been completed and an assessment is being made right now with respect to ongoing work which might be undertaken. I hope to be able to make a more complete statement within a few weeks.

**REQUEST FOR BRIEFING OF MEMBERS ON PROGRESS OF WORK ON FUNDY TIDAL POWER PROJECT**

**Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North):** Would the minister and his officials be willing to meet with an *ad hoc* committee of members of parliament from both the Commons and the other place to discuss all aspects of the work as far as Fundy power is concerned? This is a non-partisan committee composed of members representing maritime provinces.

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** I would be very pleased to consider any suggestions the hon. member might wish to make to me. I can tell him I have been meeting with my own colleagues from the maritime region on this important question and that they have been providing me with a lot of useful advice. So I have already set up the kind of committee he is talking about among my own colleagues.

**Mr. Coates:** I appreciate the minister's statement but I do not think a tidal power program for the maritime provinces is one which should be left to Liberal members of parliament only. Would he be willing to meet with all members from the region so that we might all have an appreciation of what the government intends to do in this regard?

**Mr. Gillespie:** Of course, I am prepared to meet with members of the House from whatever side on this issue. I have

[Mr. Fox.]

been meeting with Tory representatives already. The Premier of New Brunswick is very much involved in this question and is supporting the idea in a financial way. Similarly, I have been meeting with the Premier of Nova Scotia who is also interested in this question. I am not sure the hon. member hasn't something reasonable to offer, and if he has I shall be glad to hear from him.

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**INCOME TAX****AUTHORITY FOR ISSUANCE OF INTERPRETATION BULLETIN ALLEGEDLY ALTERING TREATMENT OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of National Revenue. Some weeks ago an interpretation bulletin was issued by the income tax division of the hon. lady's department relating to the treatment of employee benefits in connection with so-called interest-free or low-interest loans as a condition of employment. Changes were made without reference to parliament and in the absence of an order in council. My question is this: by what authority does the minister issue an interpretation bulletin which drastically alters the tax pattern of many thousands of people in this country? Would she explain precisely the reasons for this change and the basis on which it was made?

[Translation]

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, mine is an administration department which is usually very prudent and which is even accused sometimes of being unduly prudent and too much on its guard. Therefore I am particularly surprised by the innuendo of the hon. member and I am going to check immediately about this interpretation bulletin. They are published on a regular basis and I do not know what the hon. member is referring to.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, I am terribly sorry to see that the minister seems rather shocked because I ask her a question about the object of a public bulletin and about the changes which have occurred. I think, Mr. Speaker, that the minister should be aware of the change in policy mentioned in this interpretation bulletin and that, if necessary, she should ask her deputy minister to advise her more frequently about what is going on in her department.

**Miss Bégin:** Mr. Speaker, of course I work in very close co-operation with my officials, which is why I am surprised by the question of the hon. member, for he is very well aware of my department's responsibilities. I do not get to see all these interpretation bulletins because they are administrative instruments detailing and explaining laws and regulations passed by Parliament. We never initiate policy changes because that is the responsibility of my colleague the Minister of Finance. In order not to offend my hon. colleague, I shall indeed check into this matter before stating positively that no change of policies has occurred.