

Inquiries of the Ministry

of department operation. It is an internal investigation, and as soon as its findings are in our possession I will study the recommendations with the Commissioner of Penitentiaries and determine what action is to be taken. I shall certainly inform the House at that time.

[English]

INQUIRY AS TO REPORT ON SUICIDES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, to exercise my rights in both languages, I should like to ask the minister whether, in view of another disturbing problem regarding penitentiaries, namely, the suicide rate, especially at St. Vincent de Paul, we can expect the government to report the findings of the committee of investigation at that penitentiary?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General) Mr. Speaker, I will certainly take into consideration the question of suicides in penitentiaries, and I will also give it priority.

I was stunned by the number of suicides in such institutions last year. The situation is becoming alarming and undoubtedly, we must take action. At this stage, I cannot suggest to the House any other course than that followed up to now.

[English]

SUGGESTED PUBLIC INQUIRY

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I add my wishes to those of the Leader of the Opposition to the newly appointed minister. I hope he accomplishes much more than his predecessors. In light of not only the situation referred to by the Leader of the Opposition but the escapes and riot at Prince Albert penitentiary, the disturbance at the British Columbia penitentiary and the whole concept surrounding our approach to penitentiaries, would the minister not be led to conclude that we need a public inquiry into the structure, organization and administration of penitentiaries?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, due to the initiative of my predecessor who was very active and efficient in the administration of this department, a great number of investigations into the penitentiary system have been held, as I realized when I took over the responsibilities of Solicitor General.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Goyer: I must say that the situation is not alarming, far from it. In fact, certain things which take place in the penitentiaries are perhaps normal, perhaps not, but I am inclined to believe that the administration of penitentiaries is good and the people responsible for the penitentiary system will have my full confidence until I am proved wrong.

[Mr. Goyer.]

[English]

REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF HOUSE COMMITTEE

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Government House Leader. In view of the important issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Skeena, and also the concern of many people regarding the present operation of our penitentiaries, would he indicate to the House whether the parliamentary committee on penitentiaries, which has operated from time to time but has not been convened to my knowledge in the last year or so, might be established early this year so that it might work effectively on these and other problems?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I propose to place a reference on this subject on the Order Paper soon.

* * *

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF CANADIAN COMPANIES—PUBLICATION OF REPORT TO CABINET AND INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue who has been charged with the responsibility of looking into the question of foreign ownership of Canadian companies. My question arises from the fact that steps are now being taken by foreign companies to acquire the Seaway Hotels and the Aimco Company of Toronto. What steps does the government propose to take to stop the growing takeover of Canadian companies which has brought us to the position where 8,500 Canadian firms are now foreign-owned and controlled?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member's question is asked in very general terms. He has invited the minister or someone else on behalf of the government to indicate what steps will be taken to remedy a situation. It seems to me that the question is too general to be accepted in those terms. The hon. member might like to rephrase his question.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might make my question more specific. I should like to ask the minister whether the report which he is preparing for the cabinet has been submitted to the cabinet and whether or not that report will be made public? How soon can we expect legislation to be introduced arising out of the report which he has been preparing?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, in respect of the first part of the hon. member's question, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to comment on what is essentially a matter of cabinet busi-