

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I have been kept very fully informed both by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of the Treasury in the United States. Mr. Debré spoke to me about the conference when he was here the other day, and both the chancellor and the secretary of the treasury have said that as soon as the meetings are over they will keep me fully informed about the outcome and upon what, we hope, will be a good result.

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern): As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if this is another case where the United States will speak for Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Red Deer wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Yes, Mr. Speaker. In replying to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States did the Minister of Finance indicate that it would be well if Canada were represented also; or does he imply that the interest rate problem in North America, to which the minister referred, is strictly the responsibility of the United States?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my answer to the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, the principal factor affecting the international level of interest rates, which of course become reflected in Canada, are interest rates in Europe and the United States, and we do hope these countries will co-operate in such a way that interest rates generally will come down because this will have a very good effect in Canada.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE**PROPOSED BONUS FOR BILINGUAL
CIVIL SERVANTS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

The government has accepted the principle of the bonus for bilingualism and has decided to grant a 7 per cent bonus to bilingual civil servants. Could the Prime Minister tell us when the government intends to pay this bonus to bilingual employees, and will there be any retroactivity in this regard?

[English]

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the regulations have been laid

[Mr. Douglas.]

down to deal with the matter of compensation for employees where a knowledge of both languages is important. I will have to look into the latter part of the question concerning where these regulations do or will apply.

[Later:]

Mr. Pearson: I might inform the hon. member that I have learned now that the bilingual bonus, in those cases in which it is effective, has been made retroactive to October 1, 1966.

HOUSE OF COMMONS**OMBUDSMAN—REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
CONCERNING APPOINTMENT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. the Prime Minister. A few weeks ago the Prime Minister mentioned that before long he would be announcing a policy relating to the establishment of the office of ombudsman. In view of the fact that a majority of the provinces have indicated that in their current legislative sessions they will be providing for such an office, does the Prime Minister have any statement to make in this regard at this time?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Not today, Mr. Speaker. I hope in a day or two to be able to make a short statement. I do not believe the majority of the provinces have decided to appoint an ombudsman, although some provinces have. This is a very important question in its relationship to the provincial and federal governments. This is one aspect of the matter which we are considering.

CANADA LABOUR CODE**APPLICATIONS FOR DEFERMENT RESPECTING
RAILWAY WORKERS**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Labour whether all applications for deferment, particularly in the field of railway running trades workers have been dealt with under the Canada Labour (Standards) Code hours of work section. The minister said he might be in a position to give an answer today.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am advised that this matter has been under discussion for some time.

My departmental officials have had discussions with the railway companies and unions