

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that it is not sufficient for the Acting Prime Minister to turn to the Minister of Natural Health and Welfare to give the latter the authority required to answer that question.

Hon. Robert Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Acting Prime Minister give us any idea as to precisely what is meant by "not very long" in regard to announcing this decision?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I would hope this week, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Since the cabinet dealt with the question on Thursday last I would ask the minister whether it reached a final decision and, if so, what is that decision?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member again, that this question should really be answered by the Acting Prime Minister.

Mr. Starr: Was he at the cabinet meeting?

[Later:]

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the fact that many weeks have now gone by since the blow that struck the Sydney steel industry on October 13, to be exact, and in view of the fact that the cabinet representative from Nova Scotia has intimated time and time again both to the press and at public gatherings that an announcement that something would be done was going to be made, would the minister advise the house whether this most serious question was dealt with at the last cabinet meeting, and could he give the house a clear reply?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The very important question now asked by the hon. member is, to my understanding, pretty well the same question as that asked a moment ago by the hon. member for Cape Breton South.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I can clarify my question. Is it the intention of the government to phase out the steel industry, as indicated by the minister of

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South).]

rural development in a speech he made in western Canada a few weeks ago?

Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, may I say that my hon. friend can be assured that my hon. friend the Minister of National Health and Welfare has been very vigilant in this matter, having in mind the interests of the people of Nova Scotia and of the area of that province particularly concerned.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Acting Prime Minister. Will the Acting Prime Minister now make the statement that the government definitely promised would be made today?

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): If you are so worried about the steel workers, answer.

BRITISH COLUMBIA—DEVELOPMENT OF
SECONDARY MANUFACTURING
CAPABILITY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry. Inasmuch as British Columbia, according to the latest report has the second highest level of unemployment in Canada, what plans does the minister have for the promotion or development of secondary manufacturing industries in that province?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I do not propose to intervene in or interfere with the minister's proposed answer, but I have the impression that the hon. member is asking for a statement which might more properly be made on motions.

Mr. Howard: It was not my intention, Mr. Speaker, that the minister should make a statement on motions because that would be at some indefinite time in the future. Can he tell us now, because now is the crucial time? I point out that the minister was indicating his desire to say something about this matter.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I would agree that to recite the steps being taken would take too long in the question period. I will be glad to advise the hon. member directly, though.