

Friday the Minister of Finance would not say when the government would discuss and decide what to do with the export levy. Now that the Prime Minister has consented to drop in here for the second day in a row, I wonder if he could tell the House—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Lawrence: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, not that the Prime Minister is required to come in here, but I wonder if he could tell the House—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lawrence: I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell the House when the whole matter of the export levy will be dealt with?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister of Finance give a very detailed answer to this question, probably in the absence of the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I would have to look up the date, but I think it was the Friday before I made that very useful trip to British Columbia.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: The answer is still the same, that we are trying to get the provinces to agree to this voluntarily. At the meeting of finance ministers several of them objected to the export tax and various alternatives were discussed. When I was in British Columbia, we heard briefs from various groups which were suggesting alternative ways of meeting the same purpose as the export tax. We are endeavouring to discuss these with the provinces and with the various organizations involved. I raised the matter at a meeting I had with Premier Bennett of British Columbia and some of his ministers during my very useful trip out there. We agreed together that rather than have the federal government act unilaterally it would be much more profitable to continue the discussion in the way we were.

Mr. Lawrence: I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that if those words had been said—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a question perhaps he can put it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—DATE WHEN ALL PROVINCES WILL HAVE SIGNED AGREEMENTS

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, if the statement had been made in the House rather than outside we all would be better off. If the Prime Minister had been here he would have heard his minister say that no "fresh signatures" on provincial agreements had been made, and he did say there would be several more

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this week. I would, therefore, like to ask the Prime Minister whether he now has any firm idea when his program will become nationwide, or whether a special first ministers' meeting is being considered by him or the government to resolve what must be very serious differences between several of the provinces and this government?

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): You can go away for a month now, Allan.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is possible that the matter would have to be resolved at a meeting of first ministers, but for the time being I do not think so. The provinces have asked for, and been given, a fair amount of time to work out their reactions in detail to this.

Mr. Lawrence: How long?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member asks how long. The Premier of British Columbia asked if he could have a little time longer because he had just been elected, and it seemed reasonable for me to give him that time rather than force it down his throat. I am surprised that the opposition is urging us to act unilaterally in this matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

REFERENCE TO ACQUISITION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT DURING DISCUSSION OF CONTRACTUAL LINK WITH EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and has to do with discussions he had several months ago with his confrères among the European Economic Community regarding some formalized form of contractual relations with that group of nations. I wonder if I might ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether in the course of these conversations, either directly or through his officials, the question of acquisition by Canada of military equipment came up, whether this was part of the discussions that followed with officials under his jurisdiction and the several jurisdictions in Europe, and whether in fact if the question of acquisition by Canada of military equipment came up did it in fact involve naval replacement programs or tank replacement programs?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in the discussions of the contractual link or form of economic agreement or exchange with the European Economic Community this matter did not arise, or certainly not in my presence, and I doubt whether it would have arisen directly with officials. Of course, in so far as the application of economic co-operation is concerned, it is possible that certain purchases of military equipment are envisaged. I do not know, but I say they were not discussed in my presence. It might be relevant to the hon. member's question though, if I said I did discuss the question of NATO when I was in Europe, and very often with the same