

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, January 26, 1961

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

MAIN ESTIMATES, 1961-62

A message from His Excellency the Governor General, transmitting estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1962, was presented by Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance) and read by Mr. Speaker to the house.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton) moved:

That the message of His Excellency, together with the estimates presented this day, be referred to the committee of supply.

Mr. Benidickson: I note the hon. gentleman is not making a speech. This time the minister is abiding by the rules.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I might inform the hon. member that I am not making a speech but I have prepared a summary concerning the estimates for the information of the house and the press. Copies of the summary in English and in French will be available at my office to all hon. members who are interested.

Mr. Benidickson: Reverting to the former practice.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, doing what we think is sound in the interests of understanding.

Mr. Benidickson: After criticism.

Motion agreed to.

UNITED NATIONS

CONGO—REPORTED REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL TROOPS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question arising out of reports in the press to the effect that the Secretary General of the United Nations has requested additional forces from other countries to take the place of those being withdrawn from the Congo. My question is whether the Canadian government has been approached in this connection, and if so what has been the reaction of the government to that approach?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I too saw the reports, but the Canadian government has not been approached in this regard.

CONGO—REPORTED REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF FOOD

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs arising out of continuing reports of widespread starvation in the Congo. The report on the radio this morning indicated that 50,000 pounds of powdered milk were ready for shipment but there was no means to get it there. Can the minister tell the house what action the government is taking to move food supplies to the Congo?

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that report is not accurate in so far as it refers to Canada. We are giving serious consideration to this question. At the moment I am not in a position to make any report. One difficulty is that the main food of the Congolese is rice; they do not use wheat at all. However, we are working on the problem.

Mr. Argue: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since people are dying daily in the Congo, I do not think this question should be delayed any longer.

Mr. Green: Mr. Speaker, I have already told the hon. member we are attempting to do something in this regard, but it is not as easy a matter as the hon. member thinks.

CONGO—REPORTED BEATING OF MR. LUMUMBA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On January 19 last I asked the minister a question concerning the reported beating of former Premier Lumumba of the Congo. Knowing of his concern with this problem, and that it is his usual custom to follow up such matters, I wonder whether the minister has any further information to report to the house.

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker. This question was considered in the Congo advisory committee a day or two ago, of which committee Canada is a member, and our representative there made our protest on the treatment that had been meted out to Mr. Lumumba. Other members of the Congo advisory committee did the same thing. The Secretary General of the United Nations has