

much has been researched. I am now studying it, to see how we, at the federal level, can work, in view of the vacuum left as a result of the lack of initiative of some provincial governments which see no value in consultation, and would sooner engage in confrontation and abandon their responsibilities.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RHODESIAN TRANSITION FUND—POSSIBILITY OF CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, whom I congratulate on his recent appointment. In view of the statement made by the minister following his speech at the United Nations, that Canada could possibly be asked to contribute to a so-called Rhodesian transition fund, is the minister in the position to inform the House whether the government has considered this matter and taken a decision in this regard. If so, what amount is Canada prepared to contribute?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his good wishes. No decision has been made, for the obvious reason, as I said at the time, that no hard proposal had been put to Canada or to the best of my knowledge to any country, other than perhaps the United Kingdom, by the United States. When I met with Secretary of State Kissinger in New York he indicated that part of the settlement proposal was to establish a fund and that he, personally, was then working on a possible assignment of percentages as well as on the total amount which might be in that fund. But there was no direct request that Canada should participate. The implication of a number of comments made publicly is that we may well be asked to do so, but the situation is as I have described it. No request has been made to date.

I should also advise the hon. member that I shall be going to Washington on Friday again to meet with Mr. Kissinger, and this may well be one of the matters on which there will be further clarification at that time.

ADMISSION OF RHODESIAN REFUGEES TO CANADA

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister conducted, or does he intend to conduct, talks with American and British authorities on the admission to Canada of some 20,000 white Rhodesians and refugees? If so, on what assumption?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have held talks on this matter with United States authorities and advice I obtained from that source, which I regard as probably the best informed at the moment, is that the refugee question is not the major one involved at this stage of the negotiations and, indeed, that it

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probably is not wise to escalate that aspect of the matter at this time.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

OLD AGE PENSIONS—SUGGESTED CHANGES IN PROVISIONS RELATING TO RESIDENCY AND PENSIONS EARNED OVERSEAS

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On April 14 he advised the House that the government was to bring in amendments to the Old Age Security legislation affecting, among other things, residency and reciprocal agreements affecting persons who have earned pensions overseas and are now living in this country. That measure involved some 500,000 people, yet in the Speech from the Throne there is no indication that this is a matter of urgency or priority. Can the minister say why this important matter was not included in the Speech from the Throne?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, there certainly are several important matters to be discussed during this session when bills will be introduced in the House that are not necessarily mentioned in the Speech from the Throne.

Amendments to the Old Age Security Act are one such a project. The bill is being drafted and I hope I will be able to table it in the House for first reading in the months to come.

[English]

OLD AGE PENSIONS—CONSULTATIONS WITH PROVINCES ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When the minister advised the House about the amendment, he indicated that it did not require provincial approval but that it required provincial consultation. Can the minister advise whether he has consulted, and will the provinces and territories now agree to the type of amendment he envisages as being included in the bill to which he just referred?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I do not think I have ever said, Mr. Speaker, that such amendments required provincial approval or even provincial consultation. I have indicated, however, that I would readily undertake consultations with the provinces so as to maintain the spirit of co-operation developed in the field of social security over the past three years.

This project was discussed with my colleagues, if I remember well, at the last federal-provincial conference held in June, and no objection was made to the project either at the June conference or afterwards. Consequently, I think that we can proceed to consideration of a study of this project with confidence.