

Inquiries of the Ministry

consider recommending to the cabinet the accepting of the U.S.S.R. invitation for a Canadian parliamentary delegation to visit Russia, which was transmitted to the Canadian embassy in Moscow on January 6 of this year?

Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs): My hon. friend just gave notice to the office of the Secretary of State for External Affairs a few moments before I came into the house. I suspect that if the Secretary of State for External Affairs were here he would want to take this question into serious consideration before giving a reply, if it really in fact deserves one.

USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS TO PUBLISH SPEECH
BY MINISTER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Donald M. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, may I address a question to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister consider it a proper use of public funds that the information division of the Department of External Affairs should publish the speech made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in the debate in this house on January 31, and no speeches of any of the other members who participated in that debate? I asked a similar question yesterday with reference to the publication of the speech made in the house by the same minister on January 24.

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that is a question that I should be expected to answer on the orders of the day. I think the hon. gentleman asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs about that matter a day or two ago and that he said he was looking into it.

Mr. Fleming: It was not the same matter. It was a different speech in a different debate but a similar situation where public funds are used to publish a speech of the minister but of no other member who spoke in the debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think these matters could be dealt with when the estimates of the various departments are before the committee of supply.

UNNECESSARY DELAY OF UNION OFFICIALS BY
UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. F. G. J. Hahn (New Westminster): In the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, may I direct a question to the acting minister? Would the minister make a statement on the charge by the united fishermen and allied workers' union that a Mrs.

[Mr. Nicholson.]

Mickey Beagle and union delegates were unnecessarily delayed and questioned by United States immigration authorities while en route to meetings of the international halibut commission, the international Pacific salmon fisheries commission, and a meeting of local 3, international longshoremen and warehousemen's union, all taking place in Seattle, Washington?

Mr. Speaker: The question is unusually long. It may be one of urgency, but I do not think it is the type of question which should be asked at this time. While I am on my feet I will ask hon. members to realize that the rule which allows them to put questions at this time places strict limitations on the type of question which may be asked. I know that there is a tendency to break away from that limitation and perhaps institute a new style. The questions which are to be asked at this time are not to supervise the day to day operations of the government. They are to seek information which later may be used by hon. members in debate, which makes it quite a different proposition. This is the rule the house has adopted and the one you expect me to put into effect.

Mr. Hahn: With all due deference to your ruling, I would point out that—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry that it just happens that I say something when it is the hon. member asking the question. He does not ask very many questions and is not at fault very often. However, the hon. member stands up and says, "With all due respect to your ruling." This is another very important rule, that rulings of the Speaker are not debatable. To what extent are we going to observe this rule? I would hope that whenever I do make a ruling, hon. members would take it that it is not debatable.

[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hahn: Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct another question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs or, in his absence, to the acting minister. Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs assure the house that he will examine into the charges I mentioned earlier so that Canadian citizens will be able to choose delegates that can properly represent them?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I did not hear the question, Mr. Speaker. It may have been directed to some other minister, but if it was directed to me, I shall see that the minister or his parliamentary assistant is advised.