

Inquiries of the Ministry

ensure that expenses at all levels of government are kept under control. I believe it might be useful if we had meetings at the official level between representatives of the various provincial governments and our own officials.

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I agree that the Premier of New Brunswick would not like to receive the kind of reply he received from the Minister of Finance at the last conference. Does the Prime Minister not agree it is a matter that must be settled and dealt with at the political level? If it is left to the official level probably many months, if not years, would pass before the matter would come back to the provincial level. Is this the answer that the Prime Minister proposes to give to Premier Robichaud?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree it would take several months or years to reach decisions on this. I believe the Leader of the Opposition is trying to make politics with it. He knows that the provincial governments, especially those east of Ottawa, including the government of the province of which he was once the Prime Minister, are in difficult financial situations.

I believe he realizes this problem cannot be met by asking the federal government to give more money to the provinces, unless they want federal taxes to be increased in consequence.

An hon. Member: What about medicare?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member asks about medicare. I answered in my previous answer. The whole area we want to discuss with the provinces is how expenditures can be held in check in the various areas in which the federal government and the provincial governments are trying to limit them. We want to discuss the whole ambit of expenditures in which we are jointly included. This can only be done by a meeting for that purpose, and not by demanding more money.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**NATO—REQUEST FOR POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE EASTER RECESS**

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I should like to ask the Prime Minister to inform this house whether it is his intention to announce his government's policy on Canada's role in NATO before the adjournment for the Easter recess.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to have that announcement ready before the adjournment for the Easter recess. I have always indicated that we consider that the meetings in Washington on April 9 and 10 are a deadline we have to meet. We are doing our best to meet that deadline. If we can meet the deadline of the house adjournment, we shall make a statement in this place.

Mr. Lewis: Can the Prime Minister not be a little more specific? Can he state if the house will be sitting tomorrow, if for no other reason than to listen to this important announcement on policy? Does the Prime Minister think he will be prepared to make such a statement tomorrow?

Mr. Trudeau: I think I will be ready, Mr. Speaker, but I will not guarantee it. We are having further meetings of cabinet committees and of cabinet before tomorrow.

[Translation]

AIRPORTS**STE. SCHOLASTIQUE—COMMITTEE TO FUNCTION DURING BUILDING OPERATIONS**

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Transport.

Since the expropriations necessary for the construction of the new international airport would keep the mayor and the aldermen of the community of Sainte-Scholastique from fulfilling their obligations, under the Municipal Code, could the minister tell the house if he intends to establish a special committee to take over the administration of the community until the construction begins?

[English]

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT**SUGGESTED LOWERING OF RATES FOR WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I address a question to the Postmaster General. In view of the fact that today is the day when the execution of many of our weekly newspapers across Canada will have been determined, with the decision postponed for a short period, and in view of the representations made by such non-political organizations as the Weekly Newspapers Association, has he decided that there should be an alteration in the new rates already determined upon, to the end that these newspapers so beneficial to the communities and the provinces that they serve shall not be sacrificed?