

Inquiries of the Ministry

with trade relations between Canada and the Soviet Union and, if so, when the House may learn of those results?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): During the discussions an extensive exchange of views on trade matters took place. It seemed to us that both in Canada and in the Soviet Union there is a desire to promote greater trade. We talked about the renewal of the trade agreement which is due to expire shortly and agreed we would resume discussions on that agreement at the beginning of the year. I think all the discussions which took place indicated the desire of both countries to promote trade.

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND PREMIER KOSYGIN ON EMIGRATION FROM RUSSIA AND RIGHTS OF ETHNIC GROUPS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister may I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether the government will shortly be in a position to make a statement to the House, for the information of the country, concerning the results of the discussions between the Prime Minister and Mr. Kosygin respecting persons in the Soviet Union who wish to emigrate to other countries, particularly those who desire to be united with their families, and also on the question of the rights of Jewish and other cultural and ethnic groups in the Soviet Union?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I am quite sure that the Prime Minister, when he comes to the House, will be happy to answer questions of that kind. As to the rights of Jews in the Soviet Union there has, of course, been an opportunity for Members of Parliament to ask Mr. Kosygin these questions directly in a committee of the House. So from both sources I think we shall learn a good deal.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): In view of the fact that what we heard this morning in the committee room was off the record, it being understood that we are supposed to treat it in that way, may we have an early public statement by the Prime Minister?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Prime Minister will be very happy, when he returns to the House—he is with Mr. Kosygin now—to answer such questions.

DISCUSSIONS WITH PREMIER KOSYGIN ON EXCHANGE OF CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES BETWEEN CANADA AND UKRAINIAN REPUBLIC

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, since this matter comes under the direct jurisdiction of the Secretary of State for External Affairs I would ask him whether or not discussions took place with Premier Kosygin with reference to the exchange of consular representatives between Canada and the Ukrainian Republic so as to enable people of Ukrainian origin to visit the old land, without unnecessary and almost insurmountable delays, as well as people from the Ukraine to visit their relatives in Canada?

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we did not discuss specifically the question of exchanging consular representatives but the whole spirit of the discussions that took place encourages the visits that the right hon. gentleman and I both hope for.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I should like to know the basis upon which the minister was encouraged by something which was not discussed.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I think I was quite specific. The right hon. gentleman asked me about consular representatives and I answered that that was not discussed. The general question of exchanges and visits of Canadians to the Soviet Union and of Soviet citizens to Canada was discussed.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will the minister, having now gone that far, elucidate what conclusions he came to in his optimistic state of mind in regard to what might take place in consequence of these discussions?

Mr. Sharp: An improved exchange of citizens of our two countries, visiting one another and helping to promote understanding on both sides.

RESPONSE OF PREMIER KOSYGIN TO CANADIAN REPRESENTATIONS RESPECTING FISH CONSERVATION MEASURES

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Acting Prime Minister. Could the Acting Prime Minister advise the House what was the reply of the Soviet premier to Canada's plea for immediate conservation measures in regard to fish stocks on the east and west coasts of Canada, and did the Canadian government ask the Soviet Union to enter into a bilateral agreement in regard to establishing fishing quotas, especially in relation to fishing off the east coast?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, the question of conservation of fish stocks off both our coasts was discussed.

REASON FOR REFUSAL OF SOVIET UNION TO SIGN AGREEMENT ON ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the failure of the government's stated objective to obtain a mutual agreement with the U.S.S.R. on Arctic sovereignty, could he advise the House as to the reason for the refusal of the Soviet Union to sign such an agreement?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is right to say that the Soviet and Canadian governments are not agreed on the objectives. The Soviet government, however, was concerned or had some misgivings or objections in regard to the signing of a treaty. They have not in any way refused to co-operate with us in promoting our mutual objectives in the Arctic; indeed, they offered to co-operate most closely.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker—