

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Green: A supplementary question. It would appear, then, that the prompt clearing of the Suez canal is still dependent on the whims of this dictator Nasser. Is the Canadian government making any demand that this work should be proceeded with without any further delay? After all, we now have a financial stake in that work.

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): The Canadian government's demands are being made through the United Nations. It is quite true that unless there is acquiescence—and there should be acquiescence—in the attitudes adopted by the majority of members of the United Nations the only alternative would be the use of force to overcome resistance, and that is an alternative which I hope it will not become necessary to consider.

[Later:]

MIDDLE EAST—CANADIAN POSITION FOLLOWING UNITED STATES ACTION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. John B. Hamilton (York West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister which may be in some respects supplementary to questions asked by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green).

In view of the report that congress has approved the Eisenhower doctrine for taking unilateral military action in the Middle East if necessary, does the Prime Minister feel that Canada now has any freedom of choice if the United States becomes involved in a major war in that area?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not know to what the hon. member is referring by "freedom of choice" but Canada does not go to war without making the decision of the government known to the house and asking for the approval of the house.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Did the Prime Minister in making his answer take into account the fact that we have United States servicemen and defence installations on Canadian soil?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I take into account everything that is pertinent to that kind of problem.

Mr. Daniel McIvor (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, because the Secretary of State for External Affairs is filled to overflowing with good news I was just wondering when we will receive an optimistic report from the minister?

[Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East).]

[Later:]

GHANA—INQUIRY AS TO ADOPTION OF FLAG

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Paul E. Gagnon (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Prime Minister. May I ask if the Prime Minister could inform the house if Ghana, the new member of the commonwealth, has adopted a new and distinctive flag?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): I have made no inquiries, Mr. Speaker, and in fact I do not know of any country that has selected a flag by legislation or by its constitutional legislation.

Mr. Gagnon: May I ask—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Surely the matter to which the hon. gentleman is referring in his question does not come under the jurisdiction of any department of the Canadian government.

Mr. Gagnon: May I direct the same question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Perhaps he would be in a better position to answer my question than the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: The comment I would have to make would be identical.

FINANCE

CANADA—UNITED KINGDOM LOAN AGREEMENT—
STATEMENT ON WAIVER OF INTEREST
ENTITLEMENT

Hon. W. E. Harris (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce the signature of an agreement amending the 1946 financial agreement between Canada and the United Kingdom. This amending agreement covers both the 1956 interest payment, for which a waiver was requested by the United Kingdom last December under the terms of the original agreement, and also the question of waivers generally.

The original agreement provided that, if certain conditions were met in any particular year, the interest instalment in that year would be waived, that is, cancelled. The new agreement provides instead for deferments of annual instalments, not only of interest but also of principal. A deferment may be taken at the option of the United Kingdom in time of foreign exchange difficulty on not more than seven occasions during the remaining life of the agreement. The only condition is that the United Kingdom must in the same year defer payment of interest and principal to the United States. Formerly waivers were subject to the same condition.