

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): This is too serious a matter for that kind of frivolous question.

While I am on my feet I might deal with a related and more serious question that was mentioned last night in the debate, that according to United Nations officials at Naples—this is a press dispatch—Colonel Nasser had exercised a veto on the further entry into Egypt of Canadian forces. The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness) brought this up. I have been in touch with the secretary general's office about it. There are only two United Nations officials at Naples, both junior officials, one in the administrative branch and the other in the public relations branch. Neither official has any authority whatever to make any such statement, if he did make it, and the statement would be inaccurate if it were made.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**SUEZ—INQUIRY AS TO DISABILITY PROTECTION AND SERVICE PENSIONS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. H. Castleden (Yorkton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. What protection is provided for Canadian service personnel involved in the present police action under the United Nations in the Suez area?

Hon. R. O. Campney (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of what the hon. gentleman has in mind when he talks of protection.

Mr. Castleden: Disabilities and pensions.

Mr. Campney: These are regular troops on active service, and they will get an overseas allowance, but otherwise they will remain as long as they are merely a police force certainly in the same condition as they would be in NATO countries or at home.

CALGARY—STATEMENT ON FIRE IN MILITARY BUILDINGS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. R. O. Campney (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer the question raised yesterday by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Fraser). The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness) also spoke to me in the same connection in regard to the fire which took place at Camp Sarcee in Calgary on Tuesday afternoon. A board of inquiry is investigating there at the moment, but I should like to give the house such facts as have been so far ascertained.

The fire was caused by the explosion of an accumulation of gas from a leaking gas main.

I am informed that this natural gas main had only recently been installed by the local gas company and was actually under test by them at the time.

Apparently, the gas escaping from the main accumulated for some time in the main part of the building, which was a tank hangar, but the explosion itself was touched off in the boiler room. There was no access between the two buildings, but one was adjacent to the other. A violent explosion occurred in the boiler room, which is a concrete building, and it demolished that building and allowed the gas to fill the tank hangar, which burst into a mass of flames. The building was destroyed. It was valued at approximately \$155,000. At the time of the fire there were 14 tanks in the hangar and six others outside. A soldier managed to move one tank from inside the building and the six outside were also removed to a safe area. However, the 13 remaining tanks in the hangar, together with other items of tools and equipment, were damaged though the extent of the damage will not be known until it is fully assessed. One civilian fireman stoker suffered burns, but there were no casualties.

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): May I ask the Minister of Finance a question? Is the government suing the gas company for damages?

Mr. Campney: The hon. member will have to wait and see when the facts have been established.

LABOUR CONDITIONS**CAMPS SHILO AND RIVERS—INAUGURATION OF FIVE-DAY 40-HOUR WEEK**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of National Defence. Can the minister indicate when the five-day 40-hour week will be extended to civilian cleaners and helpers at camps Shilo and Rivers?

Hon. R. O. Campney (Minister of National Defence): I will have to look into the question. I am not aware just what the conditions are at these two camps. I know we are progressively bringing in the five-day week, but I will look into it.

Mr. Dinsdale: May I ask the minister a supplementary question? Is he aware that the present policy operating in connection with cleaners and helpers is contrary to the principle of equal pay for equal work for classified civil servants, as laid down by government policy?

Mr. Campney: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that.