

Inquiries of the Ministry

the Board is not going. Did not the minister take that stand?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is exactly what he has done.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair, as I indicated a minute ago, will recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg North on a last question on this subject and I suggest that from then on we try to move a little faster because we will soon be running short of time.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board says he thinks it would be improper to indicate publicly what the position of the government is in relation to these discussions. Has the government indicated to the striking employees, since the government feels their requests are exorbitant, what the government feels would be a fair offer on the part of the government?

• (1130)

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I could answer that. There has been a public declaration of what the government feels would be a fair offer, subscribed to by the union representative some time ago. This resulted in the unanimous report of the conciliation board. Since then it is quite clear the representatives of the electronic technicians have asked for more and are continuing to press the government for more. As the hon. gentleman knows, this procedure of negotiation through a mediator is a step by step process. Frequently it is rather slower than we would like, but still progress is made. Bargaining is being engaged in and one cannot bargain if it is being done in public.

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[Translation]

SPORTS

1976 OLYMPIC GAMES—REQUEST BY MONTREAL FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Prime Minister.

Can he tell us whether his government or the cabinet has taken a decision concerning the request for financial assistance from Montreal in connection with the 1976 Olympic Games?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there has been no request for financial assistance from Montreal for the 1976 Olympic Games. On the contrary, the City of Montreal has always assured us that the games would not cost a cent to the federal government and we have always thought that the city would keep its word.

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[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—POSSIBLE FURTHER CANADIAN CONCESSIONS

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister.

Would he take the first opportunity on motions to outline to the House why the government feels it has any obligation to make further contributions toward assisting the United States to correct its temporary imbalance of trade with Canada in view of the fact that in 18 out of the last 20 years Canada has been in a deficit position in its balance of payments with the United States and at the present rate of deterioration of our balance of payments with that country we will be again in a deficit position in 3 or 4 months.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is obviously making a speech. I suggest to him that the first part of his question is in order. He is inviting the Prime Minister to indicate whether a statement might be made on motions, but the hon. member should try to limit his question to that.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if I were to make a statement on motions I would merely be repeating the very valid arguments that the hon. member has just enunciated and which are borrowed from the arguments the government is making to the Americans.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: As any contributions which the government will make will cause serious lay-offs to take place in Canada and result in unemployment rising seriously, will the government give consideration to cancelling the assurance it has given the United States that it will make these further contributions which will ensure more lay-offs and more unemployment?

Mr. Trudeau: If the premises were valid I might agree with the conclusions, but they are not.

Mr. Hees: The premises are valid.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the Chair might be allowed a few moments to give an opportunity to members in the back rows to take part in the question period.

CANADA-UNITED STATES AUTO PACT—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Thank you for your charitable consideration, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to my good friend, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the widespread and accurate belief that the government of Canada shifted its negotiating position between the months of December and January on the Canada-United States automotive agreement, which led to a breakdown in the talks, and in view of the minister's own commitment to the House last December that he would take the House into his confidence before a final agreement with the United States is reached in this matter, would the minister assure the House now that some time later this week he will make a statement on motions outlining the government's position on the Canada-U.S. automotive agreement?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, as no final agreement has been