

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, when Canada agreed to exchange diplomats with the People's Republic of China it was clearly stated that the Canadian government neither accepted nor challenged the statement by the PRC about the position of Formosa. We have taken no position.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Crouse: In the event of hostilities is it the government's intention to take a stand on this issue and, if so, which side will we be supporting?

Mr. Sharp: I can think of no more hypothetical question, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

TRADE**CANADA—U.S. AUTO PACT—POSSIBLE REMOVAL OF SAFEGUARDS TO AID U.S. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEM**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As one means of aiding the Americans to overcome their balance of payments problem, could the minister inform the House whether officials of his department who were visiting Washington last week agreed or said on behalf of the government of this country that we would be willing to give up the existing safeguards in the automotive agreement?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): The discussions on the subject of the auto pact at this time are exploratory. Any final Canadian decision would obviously have to be agreed to by the cabinet.

CANADA—U.S. AUTO PACT—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON SAFEGUARDS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Could the minister indicate to the House whether, on the one hand, the government has a fixed position in terms of commitment to the existing safeguards or, on the other hand, whether it has proposed some alternative to the safeguards?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): There is no commitment at this time. As I said a moment ago, the work being done now is exploratory.

* * *

OIL**PROPOSED TAPS TANKER ROUTE—CONTINUANCE OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS BY CANADIAN GOVERNMENT**

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister in his capacity as Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the action taken by a member of this House in the United

[Mr. Crouse.]

States with regard to the trans-Alaska pipeline project, has the government in fact reached a dead end in its diplomatic efforts to prevent the tanker route from endangering our west coast?

Mr. Speaker: I doubt whether a question asked in those terms is in order. The hon. member might like to rephrase it so that it is acceptable procedurally.

Mr. Aiken: May I ask the minister, then, whether diplomatic efforts are still continuing in this matter?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I am very happy to see the efforts that the Liberal Member of Parliament to whom the hon. member has made reference is making in support of the government's position.

* * *

RESEARCH**GOVERNMENT POLICY WITH REGARD TO CHEMICAL INDUSTRY**

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce which I put to him so that he will not feel neglected this afternoon. I wish to refer to the position of the chemical industry in Canada and particularly to their research facilities. In view of the vast reductions in research personnel and in the effectiveness of research in the Canadian chemical industry which have been drawn to the attention of the minister, what has been the response of the government in this regard, and especially in light of the recommendations of the committee on scientific research in Canada?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I am well aware of the difficulties of the chemical industry. A number of things have been done in the recent past, for example, the action taken in one of the recent budgets presented by the Minister of Finance to come to the support of that industry. I am quite aware that the industry is finding it difficult to keep some of their research men at this time, but I really do not know what the hon. member is searching for so far as a statement that I could make at this time is concerned.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The minister has been, shall we say, solicitous in his attitude toward the chemical industry in response to questions from the opposition. I am wondering just what the government's response is to what is said to be the destruction of the research facilities of a Crown corporation of which the minister's own deputy minister is a director, in other words, Polymer?

Mr. Pepin: The minister responsible for Polymer has said here a number of times that the company was doing its best to maintain its personnel at the highest possible level at this time. I fail to understand what my hon. friend would like to know—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We are running short of time. Perhaps the question might be pursued further tomorrow.