

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): The consultations with the congress have not come to the point where any individuals have been proposed.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**STEPS TO MEET REPORTED DECLINE IN MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance, drawing his attention to the fact that there has been a 1 per cent decline in manufacturing production for the month of March, the first decline in eight months. In view of the fact that this decline is mainly in non-durable consumer goods, indicating a deficiency of purchasing power, is the minister contemplating any change in government monetary or fiscal policy to meet this situation?

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think too much should be made of a 1 per cent decline in the statistics for a particular month.

An hon. Member: Yes; what's a million?

Mr. Gordon: I can assure my hon. friend that the economic situation in the country is being given daily attention, and I am also pleased to be able to tell him that it seems to me it is going very, very well indeed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gordon: I think the monetary and economic policies that have been pursued in recent months in fact within the past year have had very marked success.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Following our policies.

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that this 1 per cent decline is in a specific area, and that this is the first decline in eight months when one would have expected an increase, does the minister not think this is a warning signal to which the government ought to be giving some attention?

Mr. Gordon: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. friend that the government pays attention to all the monthly statistical figures, but I am not prepared to interpret it as a warning signal. I think everything points to a continuance of the present upswing.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of what the minister has said as to the present state of

the economy, can he give us a promise that he will not interfere and mess up the new set-up?

Mr. Gordon: Mr. Speaker, I do not find that question a very helpful one. I can give my hon. friend the promise that if action is needed to stimulate the economy or to direct it in one way or another the government will not hesitate to act.

INQUIRY AS TO GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ABOLISH POVERTY

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Can he tell us what specific steps his government intends to take to suppress poverty in Canada, a question much talked about at the last national convention of the Liberal party?

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This question requires an answer far too long to be given on orders of the day.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**CONGO—CANADIANS REMAINING IN U.N. FORCE**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the withdrawal of a majority of the United Nations force in the Congo and of the steadily deteriorating situation there, could the minister inform us as to the number of Canadian army and air force personnel still in the Congo and when they are to be returned?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I will take this question as notice.

RECOGNITION OF QUEBEC DELEGATION IN PARIS

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Côté (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs?

In view of the brief reply he gave me yesterday to a question I was asking concerning the Quebec delegation in Paris, could the Secretary of State for External Affairs today clarify his answer, which gave rise to confusion in certain circles? For instance, did Quebec request of the federal government