

*Inquiries of the Ministry***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

MEETING OF PARTY LEADERS TO PREPARE AGENDA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Robert Thompson (Red Deer): I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. A few days ago the Prime Minister stated that in order to speed up the work of the house he intended to call a meeting of the leaders of all parties to discuss or draw up a planned agenda. Would the Prime Minister now inform the house when he expects to call such a meeting?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I said as soon as the Leader of the Opposition was available. I welcome him back, and at the earliest possible date this can be done.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INDIA—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON PRESENT POSITION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): I wish to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has the minister any late information to give the house with respect to the Indian-Chinese conflict?

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have no further information at the present time, but we shall try to keep the house informed as the situation develops.

POWER

COLUMBIA RIVER—AGREEMENT BETWEEN FEDERAL AND B.C. GOVERNMENTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. A. Byrne (Kootenay East): I wish to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs on a matter that is of very grave concern in British Columbia, and indeed throughout the whole of Canada. Yesterday I asked the minister about the possibility of putting the Columbia river treaty before a committee of the house or before the house itself, and the answer was that we would have to have "an agreement as well between the government of Canada and the province of British Columbia." Could the minister tell the house whether there was in fact agreement in principle on this draft treaty between the government of Canada and the province of British Columbia, before the agreement was signed in Washington?

[Mr. Speaker.]

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there had been a joint committee on which the government of Canada and the government of British Columbia were represented. The terms of the treaty which was eventually signed in Washington had been agreed to by that committee including, of course, the members who were representing the province of British Columbia.

Mr. Fulton: And the terms were also confirmed as agreeable by Mr. Williston in a letter to me.

Mr. Byrne: A supplementary question—

Mr. Speaker: Let us make sure they are supplementary questions. The hon. member for Kootenay East.

Mr. Green: And, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Public Works has pointed out to me, the terms were also confirmed as agreeable by Mr. Williston, one of the ministers from British Columbia who was on that joint committee.

Mr. Fulton: In a letter to me.

Mr. Byrne: On that very question, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Public Works, having just returned from a week in British Columbia, will know this is very serious. I want to get this straight. I would like to ask the minister why, if there had been agreement in principle between the two governments prior to the signing of the agreement in Washington, that agreement as such cannot be presented to parliament for ratification.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member in putting his question is asking for an argumentative answer.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: It is in the way of an argument. I would ask hon. members to be careful about how they put questions. Did the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam have a supplementary question?

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs how soon the government intends to place the Columbia river treaty before the external affairs committee of the house.

Mr. Green: I think I explained that in the house either yesterday or the day before. Perhaps the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam was not present.

Mr. Jack Davis (Coast-Capilano): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether the