

Conversations were held between myself and the miners' representatives this morning, and they are continuing. That is all I can say now.

EXCESS PROFITS TAX

PRESS REPORT AS TO DEFERRED MAINTENANCE CLAIMS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. ALAN COCKERAM (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance if he made the statement attributed to him in a Canadian Press dispatch which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* today, to the effect that a change in regulations will allow companies to offset excess profits by deferred maintenance payments?

Hon. DOUGLAS ABBOTT (Minister of Finance): My hon. friend was kind enough to give me notice of this question. I have looked at the dispatch in question, and it is entirely accurate. The paraphrasing by my hon. friend is not quite correct, but that is no fault of his. A representative of the Canadian Press asked me yesterday whether the government had decided to fix a period under the existing statute within which deferred maintenance work carried out could be charged back to excess profits taxes paid in previous years. My reply was that the matter was under consideration but that no decision had been taken.

Mr. ROWE: Arising out of the question asked by the hon. member for York South, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance if the government is adopting the practice of making important announcements to the press before they are made to parliament, especially on matters of taxation during a budget debate.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. ROWE: I do not need to be called to order. When someone to your right, Mr. Speaker, asks a question, usually a minister makes a speech in reply. I think I have a perfect right to ask the question. I should like also to ask the minister if the matter which he says is under consideration has not been covered already by an order in council.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: P.C. 1502.

Mr. ABBOTT: So far as I am aware no order in council has been passed. Replying to the first part of my hon. friend's question as to why a statement was not made in the house, may I say that Mr. Carnegie, the head of the Canadian Press in Ottawa, asked me a

simple question and I made a simple answer which I would have made to any member of the press gallery. I said that the matter which he inquired about was under consideration.

Mr. ROWE: As a member of the house I should like to ask a simple question of the minister. Was not an order in council passed on April 17 permitting deferred maintenance claims to be made against excess profits taxes? This is the matter which the minister stated was being considered.

Mr. ABBOTT: The period of time within which deferred maintenance may be charged against excess profits taxes has not, so far as I am aware, yet been fixed by the government. The hon. member for Lake Centre sent me a note asking for information about order in council 1502. I could not recall what it was and I said I would look into it and let him know. I shall do that.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Would the minister mind tabling that order, P.C. 1502? It has not yet appeared in the *Canada Gazette* but I think it is a complete answer to the question raised by the member for York South.

Mr. ABBOTT: I shall be very glad to do it. I think it was passed on the recommendation of the Minister of National Revenue, but I will have the information very shortly.

[Later:]

Hon. DOUGLAS ABBOTT (Minister of Finance): I wish to table order in council P.C. 1502 which was asked for this afternoon by the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe) and the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker). At the same time I confess the error of my ways. I had thought the matter was still under consideration, but I find that while I was busily engaged in the preparation of my budget, and not attending council as regularly as I might, my colleague the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) on April 17 submitted a recommendation establishing the period within which this deferred maintenance might be taken.

FOOD

REPORTED SHORTAGES IN BRITISH AND UNITED STATES ZONES IN GERMANY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver East): In the absence of the Prime Minister I should like to direct a question to the leader of the house. Has the government's attention been drawn to a dispatch in the *Globe and Mail* this