

Inquiries of the Ministry

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): I must confess that I know nothing about this secret meeting to which the hon. member refers. I am not in on that secret. There has been no change in the basic policy of the Canadian government with respect to the export of the primary products of its natural resources.

Mr. Adamson: The meeting took place on March 17 and was reported in the *Vancouver Province*.

An hon. Member: Not very secret.

POST OFFICE**ADDITIONAL CHARGE ON LETTERS RETURNED AS UNDELIVERABLE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Postmaster General. Has the government decided to impose an extra charge of 5 cents, in addition to the postage already paid, on letters returned to the sender as undeliverable? If so, why was the house not informed of this intention when the bill increasing postage rates was before parliament?

Hon. Alcide Cote (Postmaster General): I wish to thank my hon. friend for having given me notice of his question. I may say that an extra charge of 5 cents, in addition to the postage already paid, is not being imposed. Letters bearing the return addresses of the senders on the outside of the envelope, if undeliverable, are returned without charge to the senders. Letters which prove undeliverable at the address given, and which do not bear the return address of the sender on the cover, must be diverted to the undeliverable mail office and opened there in order that the name and address of the sender may be ascertained so that the item may be returned. There has always been a charge for this service. On and after April 1 it will be 5 cents, corresponding to the charge for a "forward" letter.

As for the second part of the question, I do not recall everything that was said on the occasion to which the hon. member refers, although I remember that he certainly covered a lot of ground. But I may say that I myself said at the time that the increase would be all along the line, and I think the principle was certainly contained in that answer.

HOUSING**PROTECTION OF HOMES OF UNEMPLOYED**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. K. Fraser (Peterborough): I should like to address a question to the Minister of [Mr. Adamson.]

Public Works. As many of the people who are out of work are buying homes under Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, have the minister and the corporation given consideration to seeing that these people will not lose their homes while they are unemployed?

Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Public Works): Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is a very sympathetic administrator of the terms of the National Housing Act.

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): Did the minister see the press report this morning indicating that the Minister of Trade and Commerce had said that these people would not lose their homes?

Mr. Winters: No, I did not see the press statement.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**REFERENCE OF ESTIMATES OF DEPARTMENT TO STANDING COMMITTEE**

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, with the consent of the house I should like to move:

That items Nos. 84 to 103 inclusive, of the main estimates, 1954-55, be withdrawn from the committee of supply and referred to the standing committee on external affairs, saving always the powers of the committee of supply in relation to the voting of public moneys.

In the first place I think I should say, Mr. Speaker, that in spite of your clear and precise explanation I am not quite sure yet which of these mechanical instruments I am supposed to speak at. But I propose to follow the good Liberal middle of the course way, and I have no complaint against being an acoustical guinea pig on this occasion.

This resolution makes it possible not only to begin the work of the committee on external affairs but for a general discussion of international matters, and has customarily been used for that purpose. Today it has been thought desirable to alter the procedure in one respect so that after I have completed a fairly general survey the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) may deal with one or two matters concerning the Far East which have arisen out of reports of his recent journey to that area of the world. It was felt that members opposite would like to have a full statement of government policy on all these matters and that therefore it might suit their convenience, as, indeed, it seems suitable to us, that the Prime Minister should follow me immediately. Then the debate would take its normal course.

The first matter with which I should like to deal, and I think the house will expect me to, is the result of the Berlin conference,