

Atlantic area, with a view to working out common objectives and a co-ordinated policy.

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I should like to examine the report to which my hon. friend refers before I make any comment.

[Translation]

FINANCE

PROPOSED CONFERENCE WITH PROVINCES TO DISCUSS INFLATION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance.

The hon. minister recently told us of his intention to call a national conference with a view to obtain suggestions on how to curb inflationary trends. Does he intend to indicate soon on what date this conference will be held, and can he tell us if his invitation will be extended to provincial and municipal officials?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I made the suggestion referred to by the hon. member, but the government is giving consideration to calling in the provinces for consultations on the financial situation.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NORTH VIET NAM—REPORTED REFUSAL TO CONSIDER NEGOTIATIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the fact that the minister has recently assured all of us that a cessation of the United States bombings of North Viet Nam would almost certainly bring about peace talks, can he now state his position in this regard in the light of the report that North Viet Nam has ruled out any possibility of negotiations before the United States presidential election next November and, to quote a highly qualified communist diplomatic source as reported in today's *Gazette*, "President Ho Chi Minh would not come to the conference table now, even if the United States unconditionally stopped bombing"?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, at no time did I say that if the bombing were stopped

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this would certainly bring about peace talks. I said that if the bombing were stopped this would create a new situation and would put North Viet Nam in a position where it would have to respond positively to the initiative taken by the United States.

With regard to the stories in the morning paper to which my hon. friend addressed himself, I have no comment to make.

TRADE

WHEAT—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON EXPORT MARKETS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Would he be prepared to make a full statement on motions, if necessary, dealing with the serious depletion of the export market for wheat which is causing financial hardship to all farmers in western Canada, and inform the house what steps the government intends to take to regain those markets?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I assume the hon. member is not asking the minister to make this statement now?

Mr. Woolliams: No, Mr. Speaker, and I will rephrase my question. Would the minister be prepared, not today but some time soon, to say on motions what steps the government intends to take at this time to regain the export markets that are being lost, causing financial hardship to all farmers in western Canada?

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, of course this subject has been discussed recently in the house and debated fully. I am always very happy to inform hon. members to the best of my ability, but I think the most appropriate occasion to do so in this case would be on the next supply motion.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, related to a question I asked the minister the other day, namely whether he would table the international grains agreement. He said he would look into the matter and would indicate in a day or two whether he would be prepared to table it. Can he tell us now whether this document will be tabled?

Mr. Winters: Mr. Speaker, I have not had an opportunity to proceed any further on that matter, but I will do so and will report at an early date.