

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not know of any such negotiations between the governments of China and Canada since in fact our respective diplomatic representatives are not yet in place. It is quite possible there will be. I have seen the speculative stories in the papers relating to one air carrier. The Canadian government has not yet made up its mind whether that would be the chosen instrument.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, might I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether there was any reference to the establishment of such a service, or a reciprocal one between mainland China and Canada, when the negotiations were taking place with regard to the exchange of diplomatic representation?

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker. Of course there were general assurances that we would want to promote inter-course between the two countries, but not other than that.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS**ACCELERATION OF HOUSING PROGRAM IN VIEW OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In view of the abnormally high unemployment rate in Canada, particularly among our native Indian people, can the minister advise the House whether he has any plans to accelerate the housing program on Indian reserves this winter?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that this kind of information should be given to the House by way of a general statement. The minister might indicate whether he proposes to make a statement in this regard.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to make a statement about this matter. However, I might say to the hon. member that I have asked the officials of my department to hasten this project in order to supply Indians with employment this very winter, and we hope this program will be proceeded with more quickly than it has been anticipated.

[English]

Mr. Simpson: Mr. Speaker, would the minister consider giving priority to cases where few, if any, houses have been constructed during the last two years?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is making a suggestion which he must assume will be taken into account.

[Mr. MacLean.]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE—PROSPECTS FOR REACHING AGREEMENT**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the amount of press speculation concerning the possibility or probability of a basis of agreement being arrived at at the Prime Ministers' conference, is the minister in a position on the basis of the information he has to date, to assure the House that a reasonable prospect of agreement is apparent today?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have been awaiting further information from Singapore about the course of events. I am not yet in a position to give a detailed answer, but it would seem to me from what we know that it appears that there will be a favourable outcome to the conference and that the Commonwealth, as both he and I wish, will be maintained.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I am of course entirely in agreement with that objective. After that rather uncertain answer in respect of not having full information, is the minister in a position to say whether the basis of agreement will be in the terms of a declaration that is before the Prime Ministers' conference?

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot give that assurance. I was referring particularly to the issue of South African arms.

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PUBLIC SERVICE**REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF DAY-CARE CENTRE IN DOWNTOWN OTTAWA**

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Has he received representations from the Public Service Alliance of Canada requesting the establishment of a day-care centre in downtown Ottawa for the purpose of assisting members of the Public Service, and will he give favourable consideration to this representation having in mind the strong recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women on this subject?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest that the hon. member's question is in the form of a submission. To the extent that it is a question, I would not think it should be answered at this time.

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LABOUR RELATIONS**ASSISTANCE IN UNION-MANAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS AT DUNLOP TIRE PLANT, WHITBY**

Mr. Norman A. Cafik (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. Has the federal Department of Labour taken any steps to offer assistance