

Oral Questions

meet with his counterparts in the four Atlantic provinces to discuss measures to alleviate the situation?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, we had a thorough review of the situation just two or three weeks ago. In the circumstances it will not be possible for me to meet with my counterparts in the Atlantic provinces until after the budget.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Drummond wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr. Jean-Marie Boisvert (Drummond): No, Mr. Speaker, it is not a supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette wishes to ask a supplementary question.

* * *

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

SUGGESTION THAT OLD AGE PENSION BE PAID AT AGE 60 TO ALLEVIATE UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a supplementary question.

As unemployment still represents a very serious problem for the country, I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he seriously considers an old age security plan where we would be eligible at age 60, which would allow the creation of thousands of new jobs?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is using a rather unusual slant to bring up this problem, which, in fact, has already been dealt with by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and I have nothing to add to the statement of the minister.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

RENEWAL OF NORAD AGREEMENT—OPPORTUNITY FOR DEBATE

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. Was the Minister of National Defence stating government policy when he indicated to the *Globe and Mail* that the NORAD agreement would be renewed for three years and perhaps longer?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I shall have to consult with the minister as to exactly what he said, but I believe it is true to say that we have not yet had negotiations with the United States about this.

Mr. Rowland: Will the Prime Minister assure the House that the House will have an opportunity to debate this question prior to the agreement, which is due for renewal on May 12, being signed? Will he also assure us that the terms of reference that are given to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence will be

[Mr. McGrath.]

broad enough to encompass a complete study of the NORAD agreement?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the first part of the question I think it is fair to assume, the House being willing, that there will be opposition days on which the subject can be debated at the suggestion of the opposition.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Rowland: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of National Defence. I should like to ask him whether he could give his assurance to the House that, should the NORAD agreement be renewed, something I would not be very happy about, it would not involve this country in expenditures on equipment purchases such as AWACS, over the horizon backscatter radar and interceptor aircraft requiring sophisticated ground control equipment, expenditures that would have utility only within the context of the NORAD agreement and which would restrict the flexibility of our armed forces?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as I have said and as the Secretary of State for External Affairs has said, we have not entered into formal negotiations with the United States concerning the renewal of the NORAD agreement. I stated the other day that, as our second priority in defence was the air defence of North America, it was unthinkable that we would not be renewing the agreement in some form. However, the terms have not been settled and I have made no recommendation to my colleagues concerning the terms.

* * *

FINANCE

EFFECT OF MAY, 1972, BUDGET ON ECONOMY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance arising out of his statement that over all, on budgetary and non-budgetary account, things have worked out as he envisaged when he presented his budget. Is the minister satisfied with the effects of that budget on the economy and on unemployment, as things have worked out during the course of the year?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I was referring to the fiscal forecast. I was talking, as the hon. gentleman knows, of the fiscal stance, of the cash requirements of the government, in total budgetary and non-budgetary terms. Of course I am not satisfied with the present situation in terms of unemployment in this country. I take some comfort from the fact that the seasonally adjusted figures have come down, though I am disturbed about their erratic nature. In terms of my budget of May 8, the stimulus given at that time was in a period when there was a very buoyant first and second quarter, as the hon. gentleman knows, and the third quarter was flatter than we had expected. However, as the hon. gentleman knows, in terms of corporate stimulus the budget and the tax structure of the country were medium and long term in effect, to give us a medium and long-