

Mr. Sharp: As I have said, one of the difficulties in complying with this request, which I think is reasonable—I am not disputing the right of the Leader of the Opposition to want all the facts—is that to a very large extent Mr. Seaborn was making oral representations, and all that we would have in this respect would be his report of what he had said rather than any written instructions.

Mr. Stanfield: I have every confidence in the accuracy of such reports. Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs table Mr. Seaborn's messages as reported by him to the government of Canada?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am sure I will be able to satisfy my hon. friend as to the contents of the representations that were made. I again say to my hon. friend that I am sure he realizes that in the messages that may have been sent by Mr. Seaborn, which I have not yet seen, there may be other matters which are still very secret.

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): A supplementary question. Because some of the messages were verbal, will the minister speak to the chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence and arrange for Mr. Seaborn to appear before that committee so that the record can indeed be perfectly clear and public?

Mr. Sharp: I am willing to consider this request, Mr. Speaker, but I think the House might wait to see the nature of my report before making a decision or even making a recommendation.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Portneuf wish to put a supplementary question?

Mr. Godin: No, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs this question. In view of the fact Mr. Seaborn was acting at all times for the Canadian government and was carrying messages with reference to accelerating the bombing was it the policy of the Canadian government at that time that bombing should be accelerated or at least started?

Mr. Sharp: I think the hon. gentleman should wait for my report before he makes those assertions.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Will the minister's report tomorrow, since there were oral communications, disclose and set out whence the instructions came and if, in written or telex form, will those documents be tabled?

Mr. Sharp: I think the House will have to await my report to see whether it provides sufficient explanation. Perhaps I might make one point clear. Contrary to what has appeared in the papers—and we have protested this already—we received no note from the United States.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): In view of the reference made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs to both oral and written messages, can he say whether the messages delivered by Mr. Seaborn to North Viet Nam were written messages of the United States, or whether he was putting them in his own words?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Seaborn was acting at all times on behalf of the Canadian government in an effort to promote a dialogue between the United States and Hanoi, something which I hope all members of the House will agree was a most commendable activity. I only wish it had succeeded.

An hon. Member: Somebody blew the whistle on you.

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THE BUDGET

PRE-RELEASE OF UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS TO FACILITATE PREPARATION

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Can the minister inform the House whether the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has pre-released the unemployment statistics for the information of the Department of Finance in order to facilitate the preparation of the budget?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Can the Minister of Finance tell us, without disclosing any facts, whether two budgets are being prepared for reading in the House depending on the situation disclosed on Thursday with reference to the number of unemployed?

Mr. Benson: There might be half a dozen budgets but I shall only present one.

Mr. Baldwin: Table the rest.

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[Translation]

WELFARE

QUEBEC—ALLEGED REDUCTION OF DISABLED PERSONS' PENSIONS

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister.

As for the past few months, in spite of an increase in the cost of living, most of the disabled persons in the province of Quebec have suffered reductions of the pension granted them by the provincial Department of Health and Welfare, could the hon. minister tell us whether this action is taken by Quebec only, or whether the federal government, which contributes 50 per cent of such pensions, has agreed to these reductions?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): My understanding is that these decisions are made by the provincial authorities.