

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 19, 1971

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 1971-72

A message from the Honourable Deputy to His Excellency The Governor General transmitting Supplementary Estimates (A) for the financial year ending March 31, 1972, was presented by Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board) and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON MISCELLANEOUS ESTIMATES

Hon. Donald S. MacDonald (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I should like to move, seconded by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury):

That the Supplementary Estimates (A), 1971-1972, tabled this day, be referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

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TRANSPORT

TABLING OF REPORT ON SNOWMOBILE SAFETY

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, last week I indicated to the House in answer to a question from the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) that I would table a study carried out for my department on the matter of snowmobile safety. Therefore, in accordance with Standing Order 41(2) I wish to table in the two official languages a report entitled "An Evaluation of Snowmobile Safety", prepared by Hovey and Associates Limited, of Ottawa.

• (11:10 a.m.)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

PROVISION OF SHORT-RANGE ECONOMIC FORECASTING ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT PROJECTIONS—GREATER PARLIAMENTARY INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY FORMATION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in view of the recommendation contained in the

report of the Senate Committee on National Finance regarding growth, employment and price stability, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the government is now prepared to set up an independent commission for economic analysis charged with the responsibility of producing short-term forecasts and short-term analyses of economic performance as I requested on December 4, 1970, and on May 5 and May 17 of this year?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the report was only tabled and made public yesterday and I have not had a chance to study the argument. I will do so and consider the case made for the establishment of a short-term body.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the right hon. gentleman has not had an opportunity to study the report in detail, but I had hoped he would have had an opportunity to give certain matters of principle some consideration. I should like to ask whether he is prepared to accept in principle the recommendation of the Senate committee that there should be a new openness in the process of formation of economic policy in Canada and, at the very least, whether the government will report to Parliament and through Parliament to the Canadian people its own specific projections in respect of the performance of the economy and employment in the coming months? Is the right hon. gentleman prepared to accept the principle of the need for more openness and, if so, is he prepared to have the government give this kind of projection?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we report to Parliament on our views in respect of the present and future state of the economy. We have occasion to do this in our budgetary speeches and we do it sometimes as often as two or three times a year. I do not know whether the recommendations of the committee go farther than that. As I say, the report was only made public yesterday and I have not read it.

As to new openness, I am not sure what the Leader of the Opposition has in mind. Perhaps he could ask a supplementary and say what he means by "new openness". Does he mean that we should make the budget public before announcing it to the House of Commons, or some other alternative? I do not know what the report recommends.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, in response to the request of the Prime Minister for further enlightenment I should like to ask whether he is prepared to involve the House of Commons and Parliament more actively in the formation of economic policy as recommended by the Senate committee, specifically, for example, by establishing a short-term forecasting commission, as I have recommended, and having the report of that commission as well as the report of the Economic Council of Canada referred to a standing committee adequately strengthened with