

Inquiries of the Ministry

member for Skeena, as reported at page 2288 of *Hansard*, who asked if an investigation might be made respecting a report that 13 newspaper photographers were locked in a small room aboard a naval vessel for three and a half hours on July 15 during the naval review near Victoria, British Columbia.

I have made inquiries, and I find that there was a party of 13 press photographers who were granted facilities to see the naval review on H.M.C.S. *Crescent*, which was the reviewing ship upon which Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret was travelling. At no time during that tour was any member of the press locked in any room. On the contrary, these gentlemen were accommodated in the mess of the chief petty officers of H.M.C.S. *Crescent*. All had been advised previously of the limited facilities which would be available because the *Crescent* is an operational ship, a destroyer escort, and there are only limited facilities.

During the period of the cruise all the press photographers were given ample opportunity to take pictures of Her Royal Highness, and were also granted two periods of seven minutes each when they could take photographs of the ships which the *Crescent* was passing in review. Unfortunately, those periods had to be taken in turn owing to the limited accommodation, and three photographers at a time were given the opportunity.

LEBANON—CANADIAN TROOPS AT LEAVE CAMP

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Egan Chambers (St. Lawrence-St. George): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of National Defence whether there are any of our troops in the United Nations emergency force at leave camp in Lebanon? If so, how are they affected by the present situation?

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there is a United Nations leave camp established in Lebanon. When the situation deteriorated about two weeks ago instructions were given that no more Canadians were to be sent to that leave centre until the situation stabilized. To the best of my knowledge there are no men on leave at the centre at the present time.

CANADIAN PACIFIC STEAMSHIPS

BRITISH COLUMBIA—INQUIRY AS TO STATUS OF STRIKE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour which arises out of the reported interest and dissatisfaction in many quarters regarding the stoppage of service

[Mr. Pearkes.]

by the C.P.R. steamships on the west coast. Can the minister indicate whether any additional steps are being taken in an attempt to resolve this dispute?

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, at the moment no definite steps are being taken to resolve this dispute, but the matter is under very serious consideration in order to arrive at some definite action.

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Rea in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

391. Departmental administration, \$739,086.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The house in committee of supply, Department of Trade and Commerce, vote No. 391; this item will be found on page 73 of the blue book, with details on page 512. Shall this vote carry?

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Chairman, I propose giving on this occasion a fairly lengthy review of our trade position and our commercial relations with various countries, with some comments on the work done by the Department of Trade and Commerce. It is impossible to cover every detail, but any omissions in the general statement may be filled in at the appropriate stage as the estimates are considered.

The most important feature of our trade at the present moment is the over-all strength shown in our commodity exports, despite weaknesses in some particular items. For the year 1957 a new record total was established in our commodity exports, amounting to almost \$5 billion, or about 2 per cent above 1956, which in turn had been a peak year. Preliminary figures for the first five months of 1958 confirm a further improvement in our foreign trade, with total commodity exports for this period amounting to almost \$2 billion, or about 1 per cent ahead of the corresponding period last year.

Some of the reasons for this good showing have been increased exports of wheat to overseas countries and uranium ore and beef cattle shipments to the United States. On the import side there has been a decrease, and the deficit on commodity account in 1956 of \$842 million was reduced in 1957 to \$689 million, or by 18 per cent. This trend has continued in 1958, with the rate being more rapid. During the first five months of 1958 Canada's trade deficit on commodity account was further reduced to \$174 million, or about one-third of the deficit it incurred in the corresponding period of 1957.