

Inquiries of the Ministry

Since the American government has not seen fit either to delay the nuclear test at Amchitka or to listen to the representations from the Canadian government, could the Secretary of State for External Affairs tell us whether he or some official from his department intends to send a letter of congratulations to those senators and representatives of the American government who have opposed this test?

[English]

UNITED STATES DECISION TO PROCEED WITH AMCHITKA NUCLEAR TEST—DIRECT CONTACT BY PRIME MINISTER WITH PRESIDENT NIXON

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. After the Prime Minister had been informed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs of the formal reply of the United States administration to the Amchitka problem, did the Prime Minister attempt to get in touch with the President of the United States and, if not, why not?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The answer to the question is no, I did not so attempt, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize a few supplementaries on this point but, as hon. members know, when we spend 15 to 20 minutes on the first question, toward the end of the question period a number of our colleagues do not get an opportunity to ask their questions. Yesterday I undertook to try to give an opportunity today to a number of members in the fourth and fifth rows who did not have a chance yesterday.

Mr. Nowlan: The silent majority, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, the silent majority, as the hon. member says. Therefore I would hope that we might try to reduce the amount of time spent on the first two or three questions.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the hon. member rising on a supplementary?

Mr. Nowlan: After your admonition, Mr. Speaker, only in relation to the second part of my question, which was "if not, why not" and which, had it been answered, would have obviated the necessity for me again to take the time of the House.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member would appreciate that I was obviating the necessity to repeat what I had said a moment ago in answer to his leader, namely, that I did not see the utility of doing this and apologizing to the President that even though the House of Commons itself had tried to get a unanimous vote some Conservative was against such a move.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Egmont on a supplementary and then recognize the hon. member for York South on the next subject.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In view of

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

the lengthy interest that has been taken in this problem for some weeks now and the recorded vote by the members of this House, and bearing in mind the normal contacts that exist between Prime Ministers of this country and Presidents of the United States, can the Prime Minister indicate whether he at any time expressed to the President the tremendous disquiet that exists in this country and the strong feelings registered from time to time in this House regarding the contemplated blast at Amchitka?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have answered this question before. The answer is no. There has been some communication between the President and myself on other matters, but I repeat that I thought the vote of the House of Commons spoke for itself in this instance.

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TRADE

POSSIBLE CANADIAN CONCESSIONS TO HELP UNITED STATES SOLVE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEM

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Secretary of State of External Affairs arising out of his brief broadcast over a United States network in which he said that we—presumably Canada—would like to help the United States get out of its balance of payments difficulties. I should like to ask the minister whether he, or any other member of the government to his knowledge, has indicated to the United States any specific ways in which Canada will try to help the United States with its balance of payments problem?

• (2:50 p.m.)

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the United States knows that we have complied with the requirements laid down by the President. In my broadcast I was indicating—and it seems the point was taken—that it is very difficult to settle the kind of problems now facing the world, economic and financial, if one is faced with ultimatums. In other words, the only way we will be able to deal with these problems is in a spirit of friendship and co-operation. I was indicating that if the United States were to approach us in the spirit and not by saying, "here is a surcharge which will remain on until you do such and such", then I thought we could make greater progress, and I hope that is the attitude the United States will subsequently accept.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, that leads directly to an obvious supplementary. I would ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs or the Minister of Finance, whichever one can inform us, exactly what they would expect to give to the United States in respect of concessions and in what area? The minister said the problem can be solved in friendship and co-operation. I am asking him, as we have asked before, what areas of concessions is the Canadian government contemplating if the United States should be willing to sit down with the Canadian government and negotiate some reduction in the Canadian surplus in the balance of payments with the United States?