

Inquiries of the Ministry

what is in it, and will it consider bringing in an interim increase in old age security pensions?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, it would be impossible to table the white paper at this time. It is not completed, nor has consideration been given to it in its entirety by the government. So far as the latter part of the question is concerned, I do not believe it would be possible to bring in an interim increase in old age security pensions prior to the publication of the white paper.

[Later:]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the recent pension plan increases for Members of Parliament, which I voted against, Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nystrom: —will the government now move immediately to increase pensions for our senior citizens?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will recognize that the terms of the question make is procedurally unacceptable.

WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCE INCREASES

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the same minister. Would he inform the House, with respect to the order to trim some \$500 million from the welfare proposals in his white paper, what was the extent of the recommended increases for war veterans allowances and whether these increases will be affected?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that that question be directed to my colleague, the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Marshall: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, we have understood for the past few months that war veterans allowances now come under social security legislation.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES—SUBSTITUTION OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR SUGAR AGREEMENT

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary [Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

of State for External Affairs. In view of the increasing resentment against, if not actual hostility to, Canada apparently developing in the Caribbean countries, what action, if any, has the government taken to improve this situation? In particular, has Canada entered into discussions with the Commonwealth Caribbean countries for a new sugar agreement with them?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as to the first part of the question, the troubles that are taking place in Trinidad are not related specifically to Canada. There is no evidence of this whatsoever. As to the second part of the question, we are having officials come from the islands to Canada to discuss the sugar question.

Mr. Harkness: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has Canada actually abrogated the agreement that it made in 1966 for an 85 cent tariff rebate on West Indian sugar and, if so, is that going to be reinstated?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I issued a statement on April 17, to which I would draw the hon. member's attention but which I would hesitate to read now. What we have done is to terminate this temporary arrangement that was made and to substitute therefor a much larger fund to be used for agricultural development in the Caribbean.

Mr. Harkness: Is the minister not aware that the Caribbean countries concerned are not at all satisfied with the \$5 million, which is to be provided really for external aid purposes, in lieu of the sugar agreement and other trade concessions?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the objections that the Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean have taken to the termination of the 29 cent per one hundred pounds rebate. It has been our judgment that what we are offering is more valuable in light of the needs for development in that area, but of course these are matters of differences between governments. I can understand the Caribbean governments disliking the termination because this money went directly to the governments, whereas the other money will go for development projects.

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Was the decision taken unilaterally to terminate the sugar agreement, or was there consultation with the governments concerned?