

Inquiries of the Ministry

picture—and I do not want to transgress the rules to spell them out, both in view of the facts in connection with the budgetary and financial situation, the election and all that—does the minister not think it would be fairer to the rights of parliament to have the recognized budget debate with Mr. Speaker in the chair, and with the opportunity to move amendments to test the government? Are we not bypassing the traditional procedures of the house by making an arrangement which may, in the end, take more time than the other way would take, the only effect of which is to avoid a formal test of budget policies in the house?

Mr. Churchill: I want to make it quite clear the government is not attempting to avoid anything in the nature of a test of its position. The suggestion is put forward as a vehicle whereby there may be complete freedom of debate and members may participate as they wish. I agree there may be a difference of opinion as to the method suggested. We are putting this forward in good faith and hope that the house will agree to the proposal.

Mr. Chevrier: May I ask a further question. Would the house leader agree to the ordinary motion being made before the Speaker leaves the chair so that an amendment could be proposed by those of the opposition who may feel so disposed? In that way the suggestion that the house leader has just made, concerning the effect of the debate and a testing of the house, would not be curtailed in any way. We would then have the same rights as we would have had in the last session had the budget been under discussion in the ordinary method. What I am asking now is, would the government consent to the ordinary amendment being made when the motion is made for the Speaker to leave the chair?

Mr. Churchill: Perhaps, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre suggested, some of these problems might better be discussed by representatives of the parties meeting together. Close attention has been paid to these suggestions, and perhaps during the course of the day we might consult.

Mr. Speaker: I was beginning to reach the point where I was going to suggest the same thing, because I think we are having a committee meeting in the plenary session of the house.

Mr. Knowles: Perhaps the minister will invite us to lunch.

Mr. Churchill: I will if the hon. member will pay for it.

Mr. Chevrier: Then there will be no lunch.

[Mr. Knowles.]

COMBINES**REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION TO EXTEND TERMS OF RETIRING COMMISSION MEMBERS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. D. S. Macdonald (Rosedale): I should like to address a question to the Minister of Justice. Will the minister consider withdrawing Bill No. C-49, to amend the Combines Investigation Act, and submitting a bill providing, inter alia, for the extension of the terms of the two retiring members of the restrictive trade practices commission for such further period as may be necessary to complete all inquiries upon which the commission has taken evidence, and presenting such bill for the consideration of this house with all possible speed?

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Justice): No, sir. The suggestion would be entirely impracticable.

(Translation):

TRADE**CUBA—DENIAL OF EXPORT PERMIT BY U.S.**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Andre Bernier (Richmond-Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Could the Prime Minister inform this house as to what action he intends to take in view of the decision taken by Washington to deny the Canadian firm Swatson Livet any export privilege to Cuba?

(Text):

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): I should like to be able to reply to the hon. member in French, but in the words of Mr. Churchill, cruel and unnatural punishments were abolished one hundred years ago. I will, therefore, answer him in English. This whole question is being viewed in the light of recent events, and when the government is in a position to place its decision before the house, that will be done.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY**INQUIRY AS TO APPOINTMENT OF MEDIATOR IN LABOUR DISPUTE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I wonder if I might ask the Minister of Labour whether, in view of the imminence of a strike within the Canadian Pacific Railway structure, he is in the process of seeking an experienced mediator to deal with this particular question.

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker.