

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister in the meantime give every assurance that no more of these economic restraint measures will be applied in the Atlantic provinces?

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question which I should like to direct to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. May I ask in a little different way a question I have asked him previously. What efforts are being made by the minister or by the officials of his department to assist the 400 or 450 employees who are being laid off in the Atlantic region by the C.N.R.?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member said that he would ask the same question in a different manner. The question does not seem to be much different than the one he asked before.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): May I rephrase my question. Apart from recommending that they get out of the Atlantic region and apart from grants for the removal of people from the Atlantic region, what is the minister doing?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

CANADA PENSION PLAN**REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN EXEMPTIONS
RESPECTING TRANSIENT LABOUR**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. H. A. Thomas (Middlesex West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Revenue. On November 7 the minister assured the house that the matter of contributions under the Canada Pension Plan legislation for transient labour on farms would be discussed with the provinces. Can the minister say whether this discussion is expected to take place at the coming conference?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the representations which were received and which came from the farm organizations and some hon. members on this side of the house including the hon. member for Norfolk were in respect of three matters. The first had to do with the matter of deducting income tax from wages of employees. The second had to do with the matter of unemployment insurance exemptions in the case of farm workers and the third was in respect of the Canada Pension Plan.

[Mr. Pearson.]

The first two questions were settled to the satisfaction of the farmers, because these are matters which come within the powers of the federal government. The third one has to be discussed with the provinces. It is not a matter to be considered at the forthcoming federal-provincial conference but is one which will require consultation when the Canada Pension Plan as such is being dealt with.

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS**RHODESIA—CANADIAN INITIATIVE TO
IMPROVE SITUATION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Queens): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It is a little more temperate than those of a moment ago but I am sure is equally important. It is prompted by a statement made by Commonwealth Relations Secretary Thompson to the British House of Commons to the effect that the rebel Smith régime and the United Kingdom government are further apart than ever on the question of U.D.I. Can he advise whether in these regrettable circumstances Canada, as a leader in commonwealth action, is contemplating any initiative to narrow the gap and improve this most serious situation?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the Canadian government were in a position to further this matter outside the context of United Nations, where this problem presently resides, my hon. friend may be assured that the government would be only too anxious to do all it could consistent with its declared policy, a policy which is supported by all the commonwealth governments.

However, the matter is now before the United Nations. The Secretary General will shortly be making a report on the operation of sanctions, and I think until that report has been made it would not be prudent to go any further at this moment.

Mr. Macquarrie: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the minister whether this means that he feels there is no further course of action within the commonwealth context that Canada can take?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I believe that is the present situation, Mr. Speaker.