

Inquiries of the Ministry

In view of the recent cases involving bribery and corruption in the Royal Canadian Mint, will the government assure the House that a thorough investigation of the operations of the Mint will be started immediately and, if necessary, that a royal commission will be set up in order that the public interest may be fully protected?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think if my hon. friend will check the record he will find that a thorough investigation was carried out immediately that the possibility of some defalcation came to the notice of the Minister of Finance. As a result, two or more persons have been prosecuted. There has been a complete reorganization of the accounting procedures of the Mint and as a matter of fact, as the hon. member knows, it is now to be operated by a Crown corporation.

Mr. Bigg: It is on that precise point, Mr. Speaker, that I wish a further investigation to be made. There seems to be some great discrepancy—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should ask the question if he has a supplementary.

Mr. Bigg: Mr. Speaker, would the minister look into this matter further to find out, if such is the case, why very strong steps are being taken to discipline minor members of the Mint when half a million dollars in gold currency disappeared and apparently the real parties have not been brought to justice?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond.

TAXATION

WHITE PAPER ON REFORM—ATTITUDE OF QUEBEC LIBERAL LEADER

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the Minister of Finance. Is the minister aware that the Liberal leader in Quebec is attempting to ride into office on the back of the white paper on taxation?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, lots of people, like the Leader of the Opposition, ride on the back of the white paper.

Mr. MacInnis: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Bigg.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I do not think the original question was in order and I do not think a supplementary would be in order.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, may I take it that the answer was also out of order?

Mr. Speaker: By all means.

WHITE PAPER ON REFORM—EFFECT ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN CANADA

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address my question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that United States accounting firms are advising clients not to invest in Canada because of the proposed tax reforms, will the minister advise the House if and when he will be withdrawing or changing those proposals in the white paper that are driving away investments in Canada?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): In the first two months of this year the exchange fund had to buy over \$200 million in excess foreign exchange coming into Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I bring to the attention of hon. members that it might not be appropriate at this time to embark on a debate on the white paper. Quite a few members appear to be anxious to ask questions.

GRAIN

WHEAT—ALTERNATIVE TO ACREAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister without Portfolio from Saskatoon. In view of the fact that thousands of farmers will not survive economically under the "Lift" program introduced by the government, is the government now developing alternative programs for these people?

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me we have a repetition of the question asked originally. Many members seem to be anxious to ask the same question. It has been asked on a number of occasions now. I suggest that perhaps we should go on to another subject.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TRINIDAD—POSSIBLE NATIONALIZATION OF BANK OF LONDON AND MONTREAL

Mr. Warren Allmand (Noire-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister