

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to ask the Prime Minister a supplementary. Does the Liberal government take an equally tough line?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hees: Do you or do you not, or are you taking a soft line with your friends?

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN PROPOSED CONFERENCE TO SETTLE VIET NAM WAR

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): My question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In reference to a statement by the Secretary General of the United Nations yesterday to the effect that Canada should be involved in an international conference to settle the Viet Nam war, can the minister advise whether recent discussions have been held on this important matter and whether the government has indicated its willingness to participate in the kind of conference envisaged by U Thant?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have kept the House informed on most of these initiatives, I think, and have indicated that we would be prepared to attend such a conference.

TAXATION

PUBLICATION OF CHANGES IN WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS—RAISING OF EXEMPTIONS

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, in the unscheduled absence of the Minister of Finance I will ask the Prime Minister whether the government has decided on certain changes in the proposals in the white paper on tax reform, as indicated in the minister's letter, and, if so, what are they and will they be published shortly to remove the uncertainty that is surrounding all of the discussions at the present time?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I can respond on behalf of the Minister of Finance who is presently attending the annual meeting of the Canadian Bankers Association in Vancouver.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: There's your liaison.

Mr. Gray: He would therefore be in a position to express any necessary remarks to

Inquiries of the Ministry

them to ensure that they do their share in ensuring the economic stability of the country.

An hon. Member: It is a bit late, is it not?

Mr. Gray: I would like to respond further by saying that when the government is ready to announce modifications in the tax reform proposals it has put forward, it will do so in the usual manner and in due course.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Does the minister agree then that any discussions that may be held with the public at the present time are arguments in a vacuum because many of these points may become academic?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will appreciate that this is an argument.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): But it is so obvious.

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): My question is directed to the Minister without Portfolio speaking for the Minister of Finance. Since considerable changes have been indicated in the white paper in advance of the committee report and since there is an indication that the government may not be in a position to implement some of these measures before 1972, is it the intention of the government to at least bring in a measure to raise the exemptions before that time?

Mr. Gray: I have nothing to add to my previous answer which I think covers the point raised by the hon. member.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hasings): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister without Portfolio talks to the Minister of Finance today, would he pass along my suggestion to him while he has all the boys together so we can perhaps get some action on bank rates by next Monday?

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I have a supplementary question for the minister. How are members of the public who are concerned about the tax proposals to know what are still government proposals and what are not government proposals in light of the minister's comments in the letter? Has the Minister without Portfolio any way of indicating to the public what are still government proposals?

Mr. Gray: I am sure that the representations made by the public to the committee and to the government will continue to be very useful. When decisions are ready to be