

*Inquiries of the Ministry***NATIONAL DEFENCE****BATTLE OF BRITAIN—REPORTED CANCELLATION OF COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE AND PARADE**

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of National Defence and ask him whether the Nova Scotia command of the Royal Canadian Legion is correct in its belief that the higher authority of the armed forces has seen fit to discontinue the parade commemorating the battle of Britain and the church service, as well as the placing of wreaths by the Royal Canadian Air Force as part of the annual commemorative service. If it is so, what is the purpose of this? Why should this event, the battle of Britain, that brought salvation to freedom all over the world, be denied celebration within Canada?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am certain that no such decision has been taken by the higher authority nor promulgated to the commands. This would be a matter for the commands themselves to decide.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Does the minister say that he has not received a resolution passed by the executive council of the Nova Scotia command to this effect, asking the government to reverse a decision denying Canadian veterans, and the people as a whole, the right to join in the commemoration of an event that takes its place amongst the greatest in the history of freedom?

Mr. Hellyer: If it has come in over the week end I have not yet had a chance to see it.

LABOUR CONDITIONS**PAYMENT OF TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS FOR DISPLACED AUTOMOBILE WORKERS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): My question is for the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that the former minister of labour promised that transitional assistance benefits would be available to auto workers who were thrown out of work because of the Canada-U.S. auto agreement, may I ask the minister why such payments are not being made in the great majority of cases, and what steps the government are taking to comply with the commitment made by the former minister?

[Mr. Speaker.]

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour):

In answer to the question, Mr. Speaker, may I say that some transitional assistance benefits have been paid in accordance with the assurances given by my predecessor. I might say also that subsequently there have been some new developments and changes in circumstances, and representations have been made within the last few days to me and to some of my colleagues in the government. These representations are under study, and if changes in the regulations are to be made they will be announced in due course.

Mr. Douglas: May I ask the Minister of Labour if it is correct that out of some 3,000 men displaced less than 200 have received transitional assistance benefits? If this information is correct, what is the reason for the small percentage receiving benefits?

Mr. Nicholson: The conditions that developed over the last few days and weeks have created a new situation from the one that existed a year ago. This is one reason why the matter is under active study at the present time.

Mr. Reid Scott (Danforth): May I ask a supplementary question. In view of the complete breakdown of the voluntary aspect of the TAB plan and the intransigence of the motor companies in refusing to participate, would the government now give consideration to making the participation of these companies in the TAB plan compulsory?

Mr. Nicholson: I cannot accept the premises on which the question is based.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): I should like to ask the minister if it is correct that before the TAB benefits can be paid the auto companies must certify that the lay-offs are the result of the auto pact, and this is the reason for the hold-up?

Mr. Nicholson: That may be one factor.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): I should like to ask a supplementary question of the Minister of Labour. In view of the representations made by the automobile workers that TAB be paid in addition to SUB, has the minister arrived at any decision that will enable some action to be taken on this suggestion?

Mr. Nicholson: I might remind the hon. member of the visitation that I had from a very impressive delegation from Oshawa within the last few days. I assured them in his presence that they might expect a decision within 10 or 12 days.