

Inquiries of the Ministry

directors. I might say that, as the house well knows from the press, negotiations have been going on yesterday and today with some prospect of success.

As the Minister of Labour pointed out, this is a strike which is extremely hard to deal with because it is entirely illegal. There is nothing one can very well do about it. I think the corporation officers deserve a tremendous amount of credit—I refer to the president and the vice president—for having worked for two or three weeks, largely without sleep for the first ten days, in trying to bring the parties together on some reasonable basis. However, rationality apparently is one thing that has been somewhat lacking in the situation. I am hopeful that the negotiations now going on will be successful when they are concluded. I will certainly be bringing a full statement to the house. I think nothing more should be said at the moment.

(Translation):

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the minister for his little speech, but that was not my question. I was simply asking whether the minister had, in the circumstances just mentioned, authorized the recall to work of the producers, while at that time the parties concerned were still negotiating.

(Text):

Mr. Nowlan: All I can say is that if I did not give the right answer, the hon. member is talking too fast for the little instruments we have in our hands. Perhaps he should learn to speak more slowly, as should I. As I said before, the minister has given no instructions and has done nothing in connection with this matter except to get occasional reports from the president as to the conduct of negotiations.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REPORTED STATEMENT OF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON
AT COLORADO SPRINGS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish the pleasure of directing a question to the Prime Minister. Before doing so, I wish to say that I am glad his translation device is working well. Mine is not working at all, because I have not one.

In view of Air Marshal Slemmon's statement at Colorado Springs last November concerning defence force requirements, with respect to manned interceptors, being considered in some quarters as a challenge to government policy on the CF-105 Arrow, will the Prime Minister inform the house whether he considers it fit and proper for defence chiefs to make public statements concerning defence

requirements, particularly, in view of the controversy surrounding the decision with respect to the CF-105?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in so far as the preliminary words of the hon. gentleman's question are concerned they, I suggest, do not come within the ambit of the kind of questions to be dealt with on the orders of the day.

Without in any way anticipating any views on an examination of any statements allegedly made, I would say that in my opinion it is not fit and proper for defence chiefs to make public statements concerning policy.

TRADE

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF NOTES RESPECTING
CHANGES IN CUSTOMS ACT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. J. McIlraith (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I have a matter that I proposed raising as a question of privilege but perhaps, in view of the fact that this is the first regular sitting of the session and of the apparent good humour of the house, I can raise the matter by way of a question to the minister of external affairs.

Will the minister of external affairs table the note from the United States government to Canada of June 26 last, concerning the proposed amendment of the Customs Act, the further note from the United States dated September 3 last concerning the amendment of the Customs Act, which was then before the house and under discussion, and the Canadian government's reply of October 24, and any other notes that may have been exchanged between the two governments on that subject?

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, subject to the usual practice relating to diplomatic exchanges, namely the consent of the two or more parties, I shall do that.

COAL

NOVA SCOTIA—REPORTED CLOSING OF COLLIERIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. J. Robichaud (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys. My question is based on a news dispatch in today's *Montreal Gazette* announcing the intended closing on February 1 of five collieries affecting 4,000 men in the Glace Bay and Waterford areas of Nova Scotia. What steps does the minister propose to take to avert this mass unemployment in a region that is at the present moment experiencing grave and serious unemployment?