

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**ALLEGED DEFICIT TENDENCY IN BALANCE OF
PAYMENTS—REPERCUSSIONS ON STABILITY OF
CANADIAN DOLLAR**

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister?

As the Governor of the Bank of Canada has expressed concern over the deficit trend in our balance of payments, would the minister indicate if the Canadian dollar will remain stable or if it will be affected by this trend?

[English]

Hon. Arthur Laing (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I apologize but I did not understand the question of the hon. member.

[Translation]

Mr. Latulippe: Mr. Speaker, I repeat my question.

As the Governor of the Bank of Canada has expressed concern over the deficit trend in our balance of payments, would the minister indicate if the Canadian dollar will remain stable or if it will be affected by this trend?

[English]

Mr. Laing: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course the position of the dollar is affected from day to day and week to week by various circumstances internally and externally. It is the intention of the government to continue to pursue policies designed to keep the dollar as stable as possible to create the best conditions for both exporters and businessmen within the country.

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday the Chair undertook to give some priority today to a few of our colleagues who rose without success yesterday and for a few moments I should like to try to live up to this commitment. The hon. member for Churchill.

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SUPPLY AND SERVICES**CONTINUED SHIPMENT OF SUPPLIES FOR KEEWATIN
AREA FROM CHURCHILL**

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Supply and Services. In view of the great concern being evidenced both in Churchill, Manitoba, and Winnipeg regarding a reported change in policy which would mean that the annual requirements of the Keewatin area in the Northwest Territories would be supplied out of Montreal instead out of the port of Churchill as has been the case for many years, can the minister inform the House whether in fact supplies are to go out of Montreal instead of Churchill this summer?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, there has been no change in policy in so far as the Department of Supply and Services is concerned in this area.

[Mr. Basford.]

Mr. Simpson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reply of the minister, but in view of the fact that the Minister of Transport has advised me there has been no change in policy in that department, I would ask the minister whether he would look into the report that all the supplies for the Northwest Territories which normally went out of Churchill in past years are this year to go out of Montreal? Would he look into that and report to the House?

• (1200)

Mr. Richardson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have already had word of that report and I am looking into it but, as I say, it does not reflect any change in my department.

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POST OFFICE**STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNIONS ON NEW
CONTRACT—REQUEST FOR AVOIDANCE OF PUBLIC
INCONVENIENCE**

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the fact that the postal union contract expires next week, can the minister advise the House of the most recent progress in the negotiations?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): No, Mr. Speaker, other than to say that progress is being made. I think the hon. member would agree that a detailed report would not be helpful.

Mr. Hales: In view of a possible breakdown in the negotiations, can the minister give the assurance that the people of Canada will not be inconvenienced and business suffer great losses and cost as they did at the time of the previous breakdown?

Mr. Drury: In so far as the question is based on the assumption of a breakdown, it is unfounded and consequently hypothetical.

**POSSIBLE BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS—
CONTINGENCY PLANS**

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Postmaster General relating to the one that has just been asked. In the event of a breakdown in the negotiations, what contingency plans does the government have to ensure the continuance of vital Post Office services?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is the kind of question on which it is difficult to rule. The hon. member prefaced his question with "in the event", which makes the question hypothetical. At the same time I think it is valid to ask whether contingency plans are being made. A question posed in those terms is in order and perhaps the parliamentary secretary might like to reply on that basis.

Mr. Gerald Richard Cobbe (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General): I do not believe there is any indication that this will happen as negotiations are proceeding at a much more rapid pace than we had anticipated previ-