

Inquiries of the Ministry

With reference to comments, I have only this to say. It seems to me that any extended comment on a matter of such importance and pertaining to so many provinces would be rather difficult to make on such short notice. I should be glad to discuss it with the hon. member privately, but I could not make any comment at the moment.

Mr. Badanai: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister assure the house that he will give this question such study and make a report in due course?

Mr. Flemming (Royal): Yes, Mr. Speaker; I have no hesitation in giving that assurance.

LABOUR CONDITIONS**UNEMPLOYMENT—INQUIRY AS TO AREAS INDICATED IN BUDGET SPEECH**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance, and ask if he could now indicate to the house the areas of the country where unemployment is high to which he promised measures of assistance in his budget speech, as reported at page 1006 of *Hansard*. I refer to the sentence which I quote, as follows:

—I shall announce measures of assistance for new industries in areas of the country where unemployment is high.

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think that the house, in deference to constitutional practice, would expect that the budget proposals would be adopted at least in general before the government proceeded on that course that was proposed in the budget speech.

Mr. Chevrier: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. How, then, can the members of the house deal effectively with the contents of the budget speech unless they have some indication of what these areas are, as the minister indicated in his speech?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Why, Mr. Speaker, I should not have thought the hon. member would be so ready to confess a lack of ingenuity as to say what he just now says. He and others have been talking as though there were many such areas. I think the hon. gentleman had better make up his mind just where he stands on this question. This is a matter now under debate, and I do not think the hon. gentleman is suffering from any inhibitions or restrictions in debate in this regard.

Mr. Chevrier: Is it not a fact that there are distressed areas in this country? Why will the minister not tell us what they are?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I think I can point to one, Mr. Speaker, and that is the constituency of Laurier, not because of unemployment particularly but because of its representation here.

HEALTH AND WELFARE**SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN DAM—REPORTED COMPLAINTS ON WORKING CONDITIONS**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, on December 19 I answered a question in the house directed to me by the member for Rose-town-Biggar, relating to a letter circularized by Joseph A. Thain, international representative of the international union of operating engineers, concerning conditions in the construction camps of Piggott Construction Company and the Ingram Construction Company, Limited, South Saskatchewan river project. I now have a report on the present situation.

An inspector of the public health engineering division of my department visited the former camp in August of last year and forwarded his report to the prairie farm rehabilitation administration of the Department of Agriculture. This was consistent with the departmental policy of referring such technical reports to departments or agencies responsible for letting contracts in order to avoid duplication. The P.F.R.A. forwarded a copy of this report to the construction companies with instructions to carry out the recommended improvements.

After I received a copy of Mr. Thain's letter I asked my department to examine both construction camps involved. Inspection took place earlier this month, with representatives of the union and the company present. It would appear that at least some of the complaints were based on out of date information, as all conditions that could be observed showed that attention had been given to my inspector's previous report. The company's project manager stated this had been done within a few days of the P.F.R.A. instructions.

The Ingram Construction camp consists of only one trailer used as living quarters, very close to the Piggott camp and sharing its facilities. Certain matters merit attention here, and a further examination will take place in a week or two.

I might add that the union has been told that some of its complaints should be taken up directly with the company, as it is felt that they do not come within the authority of the Public Works Health Act. The union