

Inquiries of the Ministry

received a telegram from the Canadian Airline Pilots Association requesting early implementation of the treaty on aircraft hijacking and is the government preparing legislation on this matter in accordance with their promise some time ago?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there has been very considerable activity in connection with this convention on air piracy. In order to give a complete answer I would require a little notice but we have the matter under active study at the moment.

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. In light of the fact that the United States has now signed the international agreement on air piracy, bringing to ten the number of countries that have done so, can the minister advise the House and the Canadian Airline Pilots Association just when some action by Canada can be expected and whether it will come this fall or not until 1972?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Without trying to pass the buck, the decision as to when the legislation will be introduced would, I assume, be a matter for my colleague the Minister of Justice. In so far as the principle is concerned I can say, as he has in the House, that we are prepared to endorse this international document.

Mr. Forrestall: Can the minister advise whether he has been made aware of the contents of the telegram forwarded to the Minister of Justice yesterday by Captain Simpson and, if so, whether any consultation between the Minister of Justice and himself is planned for the near future?

Mr. Jamieson: The association was good enough to send me a copy of the wire to the Minister of Justice and it arrived late yesterday afternoon. It is my intention to consult with the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of State for External Affairs on the matter.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): I wonder if I could ask a supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member has a brief supplementary it will be allowed but we are running short of time.

Mr. Woolliams: It is very brief. In light of the fact that the Department of Justice or the Minister of Justice has not got the legislation prepared, I wonder whether the House would now agree to second reading of my bill in that regard?

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LABOUR CONDITIONS**SPECIAL MEASURES TO COMBAT WINTER
UNEMPLOYMENT—SUGGESTED
FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE**

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. Can he indicate whether the government is preparing any major strategies to combat the unprecedented high level of unemployment expected this winter, and when will these strategies be made known to the Canadian people?

[Mr. Allmand.]

An hon. Member: Next spring.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): As the House is aware, the most urgent problem before the government, before the House and before the country is the problem of unemployment, and all steps are being taken to reduce it to a minimum. I hope that the measure now before the House will be proceeded with quickly because at least it helps to hold unemployment down.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lundrigan: On the basis of that non-answer I ask the minister whether the government is considering the convening of a high level meeting of federal, provincial and municipal officials for the express purpose of considering the domestic economy and the unemployment problems facing the nation in order to get a co-ordinated and early attack on the problem and, if so, when will this meeting take place?

Mr. Sharp: I do not think the convening of such a conference is particularly necessary. There is very active co-ordination now between the provinces and the federal government through a whole series of regular meetings. If the problem could be solved by holding high level meetings they would be held but as the hon. member knows the problem is much more difficult than that. I repeat, let us get on with the business before us now which has to do with the maintenance of employment.

Mr. Lundrigan: May I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the government has made any predictions as to the expected level of unemployment for this winter, and can the minister say whether officials in the government departments have determined that there will be more than one million people out of work before the winter of 1971 is through?

Mr. Sharp: The government does attempt to make forecasts from time to time. This is necessary, always has been, and continues to be the practice, but it does not publish these figures unless there is some very—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Vancouver East.

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PACIFIC GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY**EXTENSION PLANS—CONSULTATION BY BRITISH
COLUMBIA WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT—FINANCIAL
SUPPORT**

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): My question is to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In view of the announcement by the government of British Columbia, through the voice of the Premier of British Columbia, of plans for the extension of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway to the Yukon and Northwest Territories, was the federal government consulted by the provincial government about these plans and does it intend to support them financially as has been done in some circumstances with other railways in the past?