

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 17, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C), 1966-67

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (C) for the financial year ending March 31, 1967, was presented by Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board), read by Mr. Speaker to the house, and referred to the committee of supply.

UNITED NATIONS

RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF CAPTIVE COUNTRIES

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but before doing so I want to extend a welcome to him on his return.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr: Apparently no solution was found during his recent discussion, but I should like to ask the hon. minister whether he brought the issue in relation to the self-determination of the captive east European nations to the attention of the Soviet authorities and, if so, will he indicate their reaction?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I expect some time during the course of today—perhaps this afternoon—that my estimates will be before the committee for consideration. At that time I will have the opportunity of making a statement in relation to my visit.

Mr. Starr: I have a supplementary question. Will the minister indicate whether this matter was considered during his recent discussions with the Soviet authorities?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I think the answer to that question will be apparent in the statement I propose to make when my estimates come before the committee.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

INTIMIDATION IN STRIKE NEGOTIATIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue in his capacity as President of the Treasury Board.

In view of the statement made by the president of the postal workers union and the president of the letter carriers union, to the effect that in their negotiations with the government there was the implied threat that special legislation would be passed to compel them to go back to work, I want to ask the minister whether he or any member of his staff carrying on negotiations for the government sought to intimidate the representatives of these unions by threatening that legislation would be passed; and if such intimidation was carried out, is this the government's idea of free collective bargaining?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. member has asked this particular question, because I listened to Mr. Decarie and Mr. Houle last evening on television and heard this statement. I can assure the hon. member that no such threat was ever advanced either by myself or any member of the negotiating team that was dealing with the postal workers.

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the minister was not present at all the negotiations—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Douglas:—I wonder whether he would be prepared to get in touch with the representative of the union who made the statement on C.B.C. television last night and ask him whether any person made such a threat, in order that the minister himself may be absolutely sure that no one connected with the government's negotiating team implied such a threat.

Mr. Benson: I have already been in contact with my negotiating team in this regard and