

*Inquiries of the Ministry*INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING—RECONSIDERATION OF CUT
IN ISOLATED POST ALLOWANCES FOR GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEES

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): I wish to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board; I am sure the answer will interest the hon. member for the Northwest Territories as well as myself. Having in mind the figures recently released by the Bureau of Statistics indicating an increase in the cost of living, will the government reconsider its announced cut in the isolated post allowances for government employees in the north?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think, as the hon. gentleman knows, this particular problem has been reviewed quite extensively and is near final resolution.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Waterloo.

Mr. Saltsman: Mr. Speaker—

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order. Again I apologize to the hon. member for Waterloo. I believe the hon. member for Joliette has a supplementary.

[Translation]

INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING—FULL EMPLOYMENT
POLICY, WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

With reference to the statement made by the Chairman of the Economic Council of Canada that the government should establish compulsory programs, could the Prime Minister tell us whether he intends to propose a total employment policy including the freezing of prices and salaries?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have had occasion to state previously that freezing prices and salaries was one of the alternatives considered by the government should other decisions become necessary in matters of economic policy. Obviously if such a decision were taken it would be announced in the House, but for the time being, Mr. Speaker, we are still at the stage of developing such measures and many others.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

SUGGESTED OFFER OF ATLANTIC FREE TRADE AGREE-
MENT TO UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the information reach-

[Mr. Speaker.]

ing Canada that there is a growing body of opinion in the United Kingdom with serious second thoughts about joining the European Common Market, would the minister tell the House whether he would take the initiative, under these circumstances, in offering the United Kingdom and other members of EFTA an alternative to the EEC in the form of an Atlantic free trade agreement?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, it is my impression that the British government has always been aware of the opinion of the British population when proposing entry into the Common Market. This is not a new event.

Mr. Saltsman: As the minister is aware, there is a change in opinion, but the question that I hoped he would answer was whether the department, the minister personally or the government is taking some initiative in offering to the United Kingdom and the EFTA countries an alternative to the European Common Market?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I think we presume that entry will take place and we are trying to get the best possible deal for Canada within that context.

Mr. Saltsman: Since that kind of assumption has some doubts attached to it, would the minister say whether he has any alternative program to offer in the event that Britain is prepared to consider—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I can think of many procedural objections to the hon. member's supplementary.

POSSIBLE ENTRY OF BRITAIN INTO EUROPEAN COMMON
MARKET—ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT CANADA'S
INTERESTS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the minister. Would he indicate very briefly the nature of the arrangements that he is seeking to make in order to protect Canada's interests?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to the Chair that is a very broad question. If the minister is able to answer the question briefly he might do so, but normally this is the kind of reply which ought to be given by way of a general statement on motions.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I think the Secretary of State for External Affairs and myself have reported extensively on what we have been trying to do. We have had some relatively interesting results regarding, for example, British agricultural policies and so-called sensitive items such as plywood, newsprint and the like, and doubtless others will come up in due course.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.