

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

EAST PAKISTAN—REPORTED MASS KILLINGS, SHORTAGE OF FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES, MASSING OF INDIAN TROOPS ON FRONTIER

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):

Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether he has received any information about what is going on in East Pakistan with regard to the reports of mass killings and shortage of food and medical supplies? Has the hon. gentleman received any information that he considers reliable either through the United Nations or the resources of his own department?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have no information directly from any representative of the Canadian government. We will be talking to the Canadians who have come out of Pakistan about the situation there. I think it is clear, however, that there has been a good deal of violence and killing. It appears from the reports we have received, which I think are available to all members of the House, that there has been violence on both sides. This is something which I am sure we all deplore. The question before the Canadian government is how best it might be able to help, and I do not think pious declarations against violence are going to achieve anything. We are searching for some means by which we can be constructive, by supplying relief or something of that kind.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the minister about the reports that India has six divisions massed on the Pakistan frontier. Can the minister tell us whether he has any information on this subject and, if so, is it of any concern to him?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak about the massing of troops on the Indian side of the border. The most reliable information I have is that there has been no incursion of Indian troops into Pakistan.

Mr. Stanfield: A further supplementary question. Is it the intention of the Minister to take any initiative with regard to the United Nations on what is transpiring in that part of the world or any initiative with regard to the secretariat of the Commonwealth to involve the Commonwealth or the United Nations in this matter?

Mr. Sharp: As I said in the House the other day, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary General of the United Nations has been apprised of the situation by a letter from the Indian government. It is my understanding that he still has the matter under consideration and has not yet replied. I can understand his hesitation because I am sure that he wants to do something constructive in this situation, and under the circumstances it is very difficult to know how best to proceed. We have been consulting with the International Red Cross to discover whether there are any practical means by which we might be able to help.

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Inquiries of the Ministry
THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

PROVISION OF GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME IN LIGHT OF SUGGESTION BY PRIME MINISTER RESPECTING PROVISION OF JOBS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister arising out of his proposal which was referred to the other day for providing jobs by instituting a shorter work week, earlier retirement, delays in young people in entering the work force and less emphasis on women working. In view of the fact that it would be necessary for some income to be provided for these groups who are either kept out of the labour force or retired from it, does the government intend to introduce a guaranteed annual income or has it some income policy to cope with the situation which would arise if the measures referred to by the Prime Minister were put into effect?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, we have a policy, Mr. Speaker, concerning these areas. The details of it are known to the House and I do not think I can be expected to go into the details of the white paper at this time.

STUDIES OF GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME PROPOSAL

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare if studies regarding a guaranteed annual income are under way in addition to the study made by Dr. Willard, who is conducting such studies and at what levels of income is the government aiming in the event it institutes a guaranteed annual income?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure whether the hon. member is not asking a question of a rather detailed nature and whether this kind of question ought not normally to be placed on the order paper. Unless the right hon. Prime Minister has the information immediately available and can give it briefly, I suggest to the hon. member that normally this kind of question should be asked through the order paper.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I was directing my question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare and asking if studies were going on in his department at the present time, who was conducting these studies and at what levels of income the studies were being conducted. It seems to me the minister could give me that information.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I would advise the hon. member that it is clearly set out in the white paper on income security that we were prepared to entertain studies and demonstration projects in this area. As has been noted in the press, some provinces have indicated that they might be interested in combining with us in such studies. This matter is under consideration in some provinces right now.