

*Inquiries of the Ministry***THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**REFERENCE TO APPOINTMENT OF ROYAL
COMMISSION ON ENERGY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister a question of which I have already given him notice. Having regard to the establishment of the royal commission on energy and sources of energy announced by the Prime Minister yesterday, may I ask him these two questions.

Do the terms of reference include a study of the power to be developed by the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario and the New York state power authority in the international rapids section of the seaway as well as the power now under development, or to be developed, in the Soulanges and Lachine sections of the St. Lawrence river? If not, will the government give consideration to enlarging the terms of reference so as to include these three areas of development?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did not have the notice to which the hon. member referred, no doubt because of my absence on other duties this morning. However, I think the terms of reference speak for themselves and it is not for me to make an interpretation as to the meaning of those terms, because I think they are all-comprehensive. Nevertheless, if when the commission is constituted it is deemed advisable or necessary to amplify the terms of reference in accordance with the suggestion of my hon. friend, then consideration will be given to amplifying the powers.

NATURAL GASALLEGED SALE IN U.S. AT PRICES LOWER THAN
IN CANADA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I desire to direct a question to the Minister of Justice. Is it the government's intention to institute by order in council or otherwise any legal action against the Westcoast Transmission Company for having entered into a contract under which they are now supplying natural gas to United States distributors at a lower price than that granted to distributors in British Columbia, which contravenes the regulations made under the authority of a statute of this parliament?

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that anything in the nature of an offence which would

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

form the basis of a prosecution had taken place. I shall be glad to have that matter checked further to make certain I am correct in my understanding. I would imagine, however, that in any event this would be one of the sort of problems that would require the urgent consideration of the royal commission announced yesterday by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Winch: Could I ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in view of what the minister has said with regard to this being one of the problems likely to receive the urgent consideration of the royal commission. This is an act of parliament already established that has been contravened. Why does the minister think it necessary to wait for a royal commission to study the question of the contravention of an established act of parliament before he is prepared to take any action?

Mr. Fulton: I may say to the hon. member that, as is his custom, he has jumped to conclusions not warranted by the words used. I have already told the hon. member that I will examine the matter immediately and see if in fact there be such a contravention, and I said further that this was one of the sort of problems which in addition would be studied by the royal commission announced yesterday.

TRADEREQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON RECENT
CONFERENCES

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance a question. In view of his ready and kind agreement yesterday to make a statement as early as possible on the United Kingdom proposal with regard to free trade between Canada and the United Kingdom I should like to ask him if he proposes to include in that statement some reference not only to the Mont Tremblant conference, which he said yesterday he would willingly do, but if he would also make some reference—in fact make a complete report—on the recent conferences of Canadian and United States ministers in Washington; and also if he would be good enough to include in that report the very important proposal made by the Prime Minister of Canada not at the prime ministers' conference in London but to the members of the press gallery immediately upon his return from England.

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. gentleman that it will give me a great deal of pleasure to make the report he has asked