

Inquiries of the Ministry

this information been conveyed to the government of British Columbia, to the city of Vancouver and the adjoining municipalities?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time this matter has been brought to my attention. I have received no such offer of money either at low rates of interest or high rates of interest.

Mr. Winch: As a supplementary question, has this information been conveyed to the hon. member for Coast-Capilano (Mr. Davis) who made such a statement recently in B.C.?

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INQUIRY AS TO STUDY BY ECONOMIC COUNCIL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Reid Scott (Danforth): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that it is now approximately 16 months since the Prime Minister referred the question of the high cost of living and prices to the economic council for a special study, and in view of his repeated assurances that he would try to find out the reason for the long delay, can he tell us whether the study is completed, and will we ever see it?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I shall be very glad to make inquiries into that matter so that possibly we may have the views of the economic council on it before discussion takes place in the house. I have had discussions with the president of the council on this matter within the last fortnight.

CONSIDERATION AT MEETING OF FINANCE MINISTERS

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this is not exactly a supplementary question but it is in connection with the problem of inflation. Yesterday I asked the Prime Minister to say whether the government, in view of the very serious inflationary situation which prevails, would give consideration to calling together the provinces with a view to ascertaining whether agreement could be arrived at for co-operative legislation, to which the Prime Minister replied:

Mr. Speaker, on September 14 there is to be a meeting between the federal and provincial ministers of finance. This very important matter is on the agenda and will be discussed with the provincial ministers of finance at that time.

Has the Prime Minister's attention been directed to an article in the *Globe and Mail* of today which indicates that none of the provincial treasurers spoken to had received an invitation from Ottawa nor given any serious thought to this question? Also the provincial treasurer of Ontario, who expressed surprise, said "That is quite a statement". Would the Prime Minister say what is the situation here, when did the invitation go out, and when were the various provincial treasurers made aware of the fact that the agenda had on it this subject?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should ask the Minister of Finance to deal with this matter. He may have the communication before him.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, some confusion seems to have arisen out of the exchange between the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister yesterday. It is my understanding that what the Prime Minister was answering was a question in a very general form. That question was asked by the Leader of the Opposition, and the Prime Minister was indicating that on the agenda of the federal-provincial conference tax structure committee meeting on September 14 we will be discussing the current economic situation including the problem of inflation.

I should like to make it quite clear that I do not propose to place before the provinces any proposals for the application of wage and price controls.

Mr. Diefenbaker: There was no question of that raised in any question I asked, but the Prime Minister said "This very important matter is on the agenda". I ask the minister, now that he is speaking and as he is the conscience of the Prime Minister in replying to this matter, whether there is any such question dealing with co-operative legislation on the agenda for the 14th.

Mr. Sharp: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think I made that quite plain in what I have already said. The Leader of the Opposition asked a very long and very involved question. I am not surprised that the Prime Minister in answering it might have seemed to answer one of the more obscure aspects of that question. However, let me read what I said yesterday in the letters which I addressed to some of the premiers and some of the ministers of finance, because some of the premiers also will be attending the conference on