

Inquiries of the Ministry

has received any communications from any nations involved protesting this alleged leak by the Prime Minister?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the only alleged leak was a reference by a correspondent, and there has been nothing from any of the nations in question protesting in any way.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

TRACADIE RANGE, N.E.—SETTLEMENT OF DAMAGE CLAIMS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. J. Robichaud (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Could the minister inform the house whether a final decision has been reached as to the settlement of claims for damages caused last summer in the Tracadie range area by an R.C.A.F. plane from the Chatham air base; and if so, can payment be expected at an early date?

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Minister of National Defence): Yes, Mr. Speaker, one claim has already been settled and payment made. With respect to the other claimants, authority has been given to negotiate settlement of all claims except three, where ownership of the property damaged has not yet been established. It is expected that a legal officer of the department will visit the area within the next week or ten days to make payment to the various individuals concerned.

TRADE

EUROPEAN TRADING GROUPS—REMARKS OF PRESIDENT OF U.K. BOARD OF TRADE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. M. Benidickson (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Finance, who has indicated that representatives of the government have been keeping in close touch with the conference of the outer seven trading units in Europe.

I wonder whether the Minister of Finance heard the direct report on the C.B.C. news this morning from London, which in part was a direct voice recording of a statement by the president of the board of trade of the United Kingdom upon his return from that conference. Mr. Maudling said the group of Seven had certainly agreed that further approaches to the common market group of Six would be made, but he indicated that in addition to that, for the advantage of trade liberalization, new approaches to the United States were equally necessary.

Could the minister explain why no reference was made in the remarks of the

[Mr. Argue.]

president of the board of trade to approaches to Canada in the hope of reducing tariffs, and does the minister think this was perhaps in some manner due to the rebuffs which the United Kingdom received in Montreal two years ago?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has asked a question in a way which puts it outside the responsibility of the Minister of Finance. There may be appropriate questions to be asked as a result of the conference, but the way the hon. member has expressed it he endeavours to make the Minister of Finance accountable in an administrative way for a statement made by the president of the board of trade of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Benidickson: My question was whether or not the observers representing the Canadian government have reported to the minister any explanation of why the president of the board of trade, after the conference of the Seven, indicated that approaches would be made to the United States; but there was an omission when mentioning approaches to the United States to the same toward Canada.

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I heard the broadcast this morning. It purported to be a broadcast of some excerpts from a statement made by the president of the board of trade on his return to London. It did not purport to be the full statement at all. I do not know what were the contents of the full statement made by the president of the board of trade.

He drew attention to the fact that the United Kingdom and other members of the outer seven would be interested in exchanging mutual tariff concessions with the United States. I think this is the position of practically all countries now negotiating at Geneva under the auspices of GATT, Canada included. There was no omission of reference to Canada that has the significance the hon. member seeks to attach to it. When the hon. member talks about rebuffs he is putting his own colourful and inaccurate interpretation on something he has been agitating about for a considerable length of time but which has never justified the statements he has made in reference thereto.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillington): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of Finance say whether there have been any recent approaches by the president of the board of trade or any other member of the British government to the Canadian government with a view to liberalizing trade between the United Kingdom and Canada?