

Motions for Papers

of the Government of Prince Edward Island concerning the establishment of a second National Park in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. J. A. Jerome (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, this motion is not acceptable as negotiations are still in progress between the federal government and the government of Prince Edward Island regarding the creation of a second national park in that province. All documentation relating to this matter is therefore of a confidential nature. Under these circumstances I would ask the hon. member to withdraw the motion.

Mr. McQuaid: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Dropped.

Order discharged and motion withdrawn.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY FOR THE UNITED
STATES

Motion No. 255—**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):**

That an humble Address be presented to his Excellency praying that he will cause to be laid before this House a copy of all correspondence between the Minister of Finance and the Secretary of the Treasury for the United States of America between August 1, 1971 and October 15, 1971.

Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there is only one document involved. A letter dated September 8, 1971, from the Minister of Finance to the Secretary of the Treasury has been printed as an appendix to the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence for September 16, 1971, of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs. The hon. member may wish to withdraw his motion.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that in a matter so important to the economy the parliamentary secretary can say there is no correspondence in addition to the document which is now available. Therefore I should like to have the question put.

Mr. MacEachen: Transfer for debate.

Mr. Speaker: Transferred for debate.

Mr. Skoberg: With regard to notices of motions Nos. 70, 75 and 76 of October 8, 1970, and particularly notice of motion No. 75 asking for research studies concerning transportation policy, can the parliamentary secretary say when we may expect replies?

Mr. Jerome: I am not able to do so at the moment but I have made note of the numbers to which the hon. member has referred.

[Mr. Speaker.]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

AMCHITKA NUCLEAR TEST—SUGGESTED DIRECT
CONTACT BY PRIME MINISTER WITH PRESIDENT NIXON—
NOTICE OF DECISION PRIOR TO PUBLIC
ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he is now prepared to initiate direct contact with President Nixon in the hope of securing some reversal of the Amchitka decision? I ask this question particularly in light of the joint communiqué issued yesterday by the government of Canada and the government of the U.S.S.R. on the whole subject of nuclear testing and nuclear explosions.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): On the question of the authority which I might have in speaking to the President, it seems to me I could not be expected to exercise more than the unanimous vote—minus one Conservative—of the House of Commons. Therefore I do not see exactly what the Leader of the Opposition would want me to say to the President except that which he already knows, and knows more strongly, from the House of Commons itself.

I think there is a further question of practicability. I understand that the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of the United States, when he made the announcement that the test would proceed, also indicated that operations had begun which would make it impracticable to recover the device. It seems to me that the President's decision having been taken, and the operation having begun, it is really futile to think that further representations in addition to those already made, and which are matters of record, could be put forward successfully immediately the decision had been made known. Further representations would really be in the nature of grandstanding.

Mr. Stanfield: I do not quite understand why the Prime Minister should continue to downgrade the influence that the Prime Minister of Canada might have with the President of the United States, but I should like to ask the right hon. gentleman to tell the House whether his government was made aware of the substance of today's announcement in Washington prior to its public disclosure at the news conference held in the United States by the Atomic Energy Commission?

Mr. Trudeau: As to the first part of the question, it seems to me it is a novel approach by the official opposition to suggest I am downgrading the influence of the office of Prime Minister, but I do take note of that suggestion. As to the substance of the question, perhaps the Secretary of State for External Affairs could report.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The answer to the second part of the question is that about an hour and a half or two hours before the public announcement was made, our ambassador was called in to the state department and informed of the decision of the President.