

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. B. S. Mackasey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): The hon. member, more than anybody else in this house, should know that steps are being taken to provide such a meeting, since he was present at a meeting in the minister's office as recently as four o'clock on Thursday of last week. I mention this fact because I was taken aback by the remarks made on the adjournment motion on Thursday evening. The hon. member's remarks would indicate that he is not aware of what took place at that meeting which he attended.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether I should rise on a question of privilege at this time, since the circumstances referred to by the hon. member are immaterial. I did attend that meeting, but I merely want to know what is now going on and I should like the public also to know.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Howard: The parliamentary secretary refuses to answer the question.

HEALTH AND WELFARE**MEDICARE—PROTESTS FROM OPTOMETRISTS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Barry Mather (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Has the minister received, as so many other members of the house have, protests from optometrists in Canada opposing the medicare decision which he announced on Friday to the effect that optical refraction services are to be optioned out to the provinces?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This certainly is a question which can be asked when the house returns to a consideration of the bill in question.

Mr. Mather: Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

FISHERIES**NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING ESTABLISHMENT OF BASE LINES**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Queens): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has the minister any progress to report regarding negotiations with other countries on the establishment by Canada of base lines, from which the width of our territorial waters will be measured? Once [Mr. Howard.]

they are established, bodies of water such as the gulf of St. Lawrence, Hecate straits and the bay of Fundy will be included as national waters. Has the minister any recent developments to report?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the most recent development is that we are meeting with a United States negotiating team at the present time.

Mr. MacLean (Queens): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. During these negotiations was the Secretary of State for External Affairs able to guarantee to our allies on behalf of the government of Canada that we will establish effective sovereignty over these bodies of water, so there will be no danger of these areas becoming sanctuaries for submarine activities by potential enemies of Canada and of our friends?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I doubt if this question is in order at this time, as the hon. member is asking for a general statement of policy regarding negotiations which have been taking place. However, I am not familiar enough with this subject to really determine with authority that the question is out of order, so perhaps the minister would like to reply.

Mr. MacLean (Queens): I defer, of course, to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but I want to suggest that this question is very important and may involve the nub of the whole situation.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, if the latest proposal put forward by Canada were accepted, this problem would not arise.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**NATO—POSSIBILITY OF RESTRICTING FORCE TO PEACE KEEPING UNITS**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): I would like to ask the Minister of National Defence a question. Is the chief of the defence staff now in Europe to advise our NATO allies that if unification of the Canadian forces is approved Canada's proposed future military role will only be that of providing peace keeping forces for the United Nations?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): No, Mr. Speaker; and that is not