

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

Unofficial and unconfirmed reports say the United States came up to tell the Canadians it is willing to drop its demands for the Libby dam on the lower Kootenay river in Montana.

This dam—

**Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think it was on Friday last week that we had quite a discussion in this house on a point of order which certainly seems to me on all fours with the point which arises at once as a result of the method being followed by the hon. gentleman in asking his question. He is reading a newspaper report of comments reported to have been made by persons outside the house, and I anticipate that he will ask a minister for comment on that statement.

The point of order I raised last week was that this was improper, that it was not permitted by our rules. If an hon. member has a question to ask he should ask his question and take responsibility for the statement he makes or the basis upon which he rests his question.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is quite true the point was taken on a question introduced in a similar way, and I have been giving rather careful review to the practice of this house with respect to the use of newspaper reports, which review I have not yet completed. But I am not satisfied at this present time that newspaper accounts have not been and cannot be used as a foundation for a question. I think the hon. member goes too far in reading long statements, as he has. Surely he needs only to refer to the report in order to found his question, which is presumably a question to ask for information, rather than to read lengthy reports which obviously give information, and give information which may be quite unnecessary to his question. Perhaps the hon. member could ask his question and we shall see whether it is in order.

**Mr. Herridge:** Mr. Speaker, when I asked the question and started to read this report I was aware of the fact that you had not yet made your decision. The Minister of Justice having satisfied his ego, I shall now ask my question.

Were secret talks held in Ottawa last Monday, and is there any substance to this report or would the minister care to comment?

**Mr. Speaker:** I think the first question that the hon. member asks is in order, but I think the last two are not in accordance with our practice. The second one is the simple question: "Is the report which I have read true or not true?" It has always been decided, where issue was taken, that that is not a

[Mr. Herridge.]

proper way of putting a question, to read a newspaper report and ask for verification of its truth.

The third question asks for the expression of an opinion on the report, and that is one of the rather difficult issues which has been raised by the point taken by the Minister of Justice. I think if the hon. member would limit himself to his first question, that is, as to whether there has been such a meeting, we might deal with the other one later.

**Mr. Herridge:** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to do my best on behalf of the country. Was such a meeting held, and has the United States given up its demands for the Libby dam? Is consideration being given to the building of the Mica creek dam and the dam at the lower Arrow lakes?

**Mr. Fulton:** Perhaps I should answer this question, inasmuch as I am the chairman of the Canadian delegation which has met with the United States delegation on several occasions.

The answer to the question is that it would not be in the public interest at this stage to report on the progress of these talks. It has been well understood, and it is still the intention, that when the talks are concluded and there is something to report a full report will be made to this house and the fullest opportunity for discussion will then be given. While these talks are still in progress it would not be in the public interest, in my view, to comment in detail on what is being discussed.

**FINANCE****CRITICISM OF PREMIUM DOLLAR POLICY BY ONTARIO PREMIER**

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition):** May I ask the Minister of Finance whether he has any comment to make on the attack made yesterday by Premier Frost of Ontario on what he called Canada's premium dollar policy and on his advice that the federal government should throw away some of the economic books and get down to common sense?

**Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance):** No, Mr. Speaker.

**PUBLIC BUILDINGS****MONTREAL—REFUSAL OF PERMISSION TO HOLD SERVICE IN NATIONAL REVENUE BUILDING**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. J. P. Deschatelets (Maisonneuve-Rosemont):** I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue. Would the