

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 24, 1970

The House met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

POST OFFICE

REPORT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF HOME DELIVERY SERVICE

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, in both official languages, copies of a report on the establishment of mail delivery services to private homes in some localities.

[English]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

EARLY BUDGET WITH MEASURES TO FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, has the Minister of Finance yet made any decision on whether he will produce an early budget with a view to indicating the measures that the government proposes to take to fight unemployment and get the economy moving forward?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, no such decision has been made at this time.

Mr. Stanfield: May I ask the Minister of Finance whether he proposes to make an early decision and bring some plans forward shortly, or are we to go through the winter unemployment first before he decides to move?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, as usual—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Benson: As usual—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Apart from deciding whether to bring in a budget, has the government decided to decide on whether to get the economy moving?

INVESTIGATION OF STEEL PRICE INCREASES

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, last week when the Steel Company of Canada announced price increases ranging up to 5.3 per cent I asked the Prime Minister whether he would con-

sider asking the steel companies to withhold any increases until an investigation had been made in order to decide whether these increases were justified. The Prime Minister said he would consider the proposal. Has he given consideration to that suggestion, and what decision has been reached?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am afraid not, Mr. Speaker. I asked that the question be followed up, but I have not given consideration to any suggestion which might have come my way. I have not seen any yet.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Since Algoma Steel has announced that it is raising its prices and other steel companies have indicated that they will follow suit, and in view of the announcement yesterday indicating that the profits of the four leading steel companies have increased by 27.8 per cent in the first nine months of this year, will the Prime Minister undertake to have this profit position investigated to see whether or not any price increase at all was required by the steel industry of Canada?

Mr. Trudeau: It was my understanding, subject to correction, that the Prices and Incomes Commission said it would investigate these rises in prices.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Will the Prime Minister urge the steel companies to withhold these price increases until the Prices and Incomes Commission has completed its report, and will that report be made public?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, as I answered in the first part of my reply, it depends on what consideration has been given. The element which I think would need to be elucidated is whether or not these price increases are compatible with the principles accepted earlier this year by all that sector of the economy, to wit, whether they would increase the margin between their price increases and the cost increases. I do not as yet have that information. I know that their costs rose considerably because of the labour factor, but I am not aware of the increase or otherwise of the discrepancy.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL SECURITY

USE OF U THANT AS MEDIATOR TO SECURE RELEASE OF JAMES CROSS

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Does the Canadian government intend to ask U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to act as media-