

Inquiries of the Ministry

whether the Fraser river board will be reappointed so that it may continue its existence and activities beyond the end of this month which, under present arrangements, is the date upon which the board must cease to function.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): This matter is under discussion and negotiation between the two governments, and when this process has been completed an announcement will be made.

Mr. Howard: I wonder if the minister has any hope that the negotiations or discussions will be completed before the end of this month. Could he give any indication of that?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Yes, the minister is hoping that the negotiations can be completed by the end of this month.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

BELL ISLAND, NFLD.—INQUIRY AS TO VISIT BY MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillingate): I wonder if I may ask the minister from Newfoundland whether he was invited by the mayor of Bell Island to visit Newfoundland to discuss the impending lay-offs in the iron mines, and if so what his intentions are in this regard.

Hon. W. J. Browne (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I did receive an invitation from the mayor of Bell Island, after he had thanked me for the services I had already given in connection with the matter. I might say that if the ferries are operating between Portugal Cove and Bell Island I intend to visit there during the Easter recess.

Mr. Pickersgill: As a supplementary question, may I ask the minister whether the lay-offs, which I believe were scheduled to take place tomorrow or the next day, are going to take place, or whether the minister has been successful in having them postponed?

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure under what heading of the minister's responsibility this comes.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps I might clarify it. The minister said he had received thanks from the mayor of Bell Island for services he had rendered. I was seeking to find out what the services were.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): If I may be permitted to reply, the mines are not going to close tomorrow.

[Mr. Howard.]

A. V. ROE COMPANY

INQUIRY AS TO GOVERNMENT ACTION TO RELIEVE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I wonder if the Prime Minister could bring the house up to date as to what progress has been made in obtaining additional contracts for the A. V. Roe industry, and more particularly what success he has encountered in doing those things which would provide more employment for the unemployed persons?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think this is one of those questions that are totally inappropriate on the orders of the day.

Mr. Argue: I would ask the Prime Minister if he does not think the widespread unemployment in the Avro industry is an important matter upon which to rise on orders of the day.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I would ask the hon. gentleman whether the impropriety of asking a question that is inappropriate on orders of the day justifies the kind of observation he has made.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Argue: I would remind the Prime Minister that the Minister of Finance, in the Prime Minister's absence on February 27, made a comprehensive statement of actions the government was taking with regard to unemployment in this industry. I suggest it is most appropriate to ask whether or not any further developments have taken place since that time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, that is a question that is proper, and I have no hesitation in saying there has been further and continued consultation in respect of this matter, and there has been a canvass made with the principals of the company for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not available contracts might be assured to that company, and that is the position of affairs. The company is engaged in endeavouring to secure contracts which would be available or should be available to that company if it is able to meet the competition that exists.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

INQUIRY AS TO MEETING BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Azellus Denis (St. Denis): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the Prime Minister. I think last week he promised me an answer