

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

FINANCE**RECOMMENDATIONS BY AUDITOR GENERAL
AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): My question is for the Minister of Finance. In light of the statement made in Winnipeg by the President of the Treasury Board that there will be further cuts by the federal government in hospital services, medicare and post-secondary education, will the minister recommend that the government set its own house in order first by following the recommendations of the Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee to curb extravagance and waste in federal spending?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question as asked is not acceptable procedurally.

REPRESENTATIONS BY BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENTS CONCERNING RETURN TO FIXED DOLLAR EXCHANGE RATE

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Has the government, the Minister of Finance, the Department of Finance or the Bank of Canada received any representations from bankers meeting at the Bank for International Settlements urging Canada to return to a fixed exchange rate? If so, can the minister indicate what the response of the government is or will be?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is responsible for the exchange rate. I have received no such representation. I will have to inquire to see whether the various people mentioned in the question have received such a representation. I have not, nor has the government.

Mr. Burton: A supplementary question. Can the minister inform the House whether the viewpoint apparently expressed by the Bank for International Settlements at its meeting also represents the viewpoint of Mr. Rasminsky?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would not think that the question as asked is in order.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**PERU—ASSISTANCE TO EARTHQUAKE
VICTIMS**

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): I have a question for the Secretary of State for [Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

External Affairs. In view of reports over the weekend that Canada has sent some short landing and take-off aircraft to assist in the relief operations in Peru, can the minister inform the House as to the extent of the assistance Canada has now agreed to give to relieve what is probably the biggest, natural disaster in many years?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I understand that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister made a statement on Friday last. The information I have is identical with the information he gave, so I do not think I can add anything at the present time.

Mr. W. M. Howe (Wellington-Grey): Bearing in mind the tremendous number of people who sustained injuries in this disaster and need to be hospitalized, would the Prime Minister consider making available to Peru some of the 200-bed hospitals which I understand the Department of National Defence is keeping for an emergency?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): We shall consider any request which is reasonable and which we can reasonably meet. I understand that the Department of External Affairs is in communication with our embassy there. The first leg of our assistance has taken effect, in the sense that some of our planes are now arriving in Peru. As to the other matter, I thank the hon. member for the suggestion, and we shall consider it.

**ALLEGED REFUSAL OF FRANCE TO GRANT
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS OVERFLY PRIVILEGES**

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): May I take this opportunity to make an explanation which I feel I owe to the hon. member for Fundy-Royal. He has just left the House but perhaps he can read what I say in *Hansard*. It has to do with a question he asked me on Thursday about the reported refusal of France to grant overflight privileges to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I replied that there had been no such refusal, and my answer was correct; there had been no such refusal. But I went on to add, basing my assertion on information from the Department of National Defence, that no such request had been made. I am now told by the Secretary of State for External Affairs that there was a request made and that the request was granted. So things ended up even more nicely than I then thought.