

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I said in reply to the question from the hon. member for York South, this is just a tentative decision. We have not really made a final decision on this question, and it seemed to me that at the time a final decision is made the House should then be faced with a resolution requiring the approval of the House. But this is a tentative decision, and I am quite prepared to say I will introduce a resolution before May 31 for the purpose of getting the approval of the House for the government's action.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Besides the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, there are three other hon. members seeking supplementary questions. We will have to try to go to other subjects and return to these supplementary questions in due course. I do not think hon. members would want to spend the full question period on the one subject, which would make it more a debate than a series of questions and answers. For the moment, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands will be recognized for one supplementary question, and in due course we will return to the hon. member for Egmont and others who have supplementary questions.

Mr. Douglas: Despite the fact that the Secretary of State for External Affairs says that this is a tentative decision, the fact is that this is a decision to commit Canadian forces for 90 more days in Viet Nam. Surely, parliament ought to have the right to make that decision, and I am asking the minister—

Mr. Diefenbaker: The government does not trust parliament.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should ask the question. He is now making an argument, and I suggest that if we get involved in this there will be debate rather than questions and answers.

Mr. Douglas: I am therefore asking the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether he is telling the House that he does not think the parliament of Canada has any right to make the final decision on whether or not the government has the confidence of the House to make a decision committing Canadian forces, Canadian lives and the Canadian treasury in an area that could be potentially dangerous.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: Quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, the government can only act with the confidence of the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Sharp: Of course, this is the position in which we all stand on this side of the House. The House can at any time defeat the government. But I am very anxious that there should be ample opportunity to debate the decisions that have been made by the government. I have provided a number of occasions for these debates. On the other side of the House I have yet to hear what the views are. I have

Oral Questions

been asking the Official Opposition to express its views and I have yet to hear them.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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COMMUNICATIONS

INCREASES IN TELECOMMUNICATION RATES— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Transport. It arises out of the approval by the Canadian Transport Commission of increased rates for telecommunication services. In light of the commitment of the Minister of Finance in his budget address to try to achieve reasonable price increases this year, I should like to ask the minister if the government is asking the Canadian Transport Commission to review immediately its decision to allow CN and CP Telecommunications to increase rates for private wire, telex and broadband exchange services, since the increases vary from more than 6 per cent to 50 per cent on various charges and services?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, even if the Canadian Transport Commission comes under my portfolio, telecommunication services are under the Department of Communications.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: I have a supplementary question for the right hon. Prime Minister. I should like to ask him if he considers a 12.5 per cent increase in charges for private wire equipment and a 50 per cent increase in charges for relocation of equipment as falling within the government's concept of reasonable price increases and, if not, could he advise the House what the government intends to do about it?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have not considered the question.

Mr. Mazankowski: Could I ask the Prime Minister whether the government has defined any guidelines on reasonable price increases, at least in those areas that are under the direct authority of the federal government?

Mr. Trudeau: As the Minister of Transport just indicated, there is a public board to look into and decide on these matters.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The cabinet also has responsibility.