

Inquiries of the Ministry

a half months. I think the Minister of Finance should inform the house why this order, which bears date December 5, is still on the order paper under government notices of motion, and how long it will remain there.

Hon. DOUGLAS ABBOTT (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I cannot say just when it will be brought forward. I had not contemplated bringing it forward in any case until after the Geneva agreements, which are now before the banking and commerce committee, had proceeded further than they have so far done.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

INQUIRY AS TO UNITED STATES SUBSIDIARIES
IN CANADA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. MAX CAMPBELL (The Battlefords): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of our foreign exchange situation, can the minister tell the house what amounts of Canadian dollars are being converted into United States dollars by subsidiaries of United States corporations to meet their obligations in the United States?

Hon. DOUGLAS ABBOTT (Minister of Finance): That question, Mr. Speaker, I suggest is one which should be placed on the order paper, as it requires the obtaining of figures. My hon. friend was good enough to give me notice of it, and I have asked that the figures be prepared and hope to give him an answer tomorrow, but I cannot today.

NAILS

REFERENCE TO PRESS REPORT AS TO PRODUCTION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. K. FRASER (Peterborough West): Mr. Speaker. On April 9 the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply said that the production of nails was increasing month by month, but the *Globe and Mail* this morning in its Ottawa Briefs says:

Nail production in February dropped to 5,670 tons—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order: I understood the hon. member was going to put a question.

Mr. FRASER: I am just going to put the question, Mr. Speaker, but will complete the quotation:

—compared with 6,854 the previous month.

I would ask the minister why there is a drop of 1,184 tons in the production of nails in February of this year as compared with

January, and what is the prospect of the production being increased. We cannot have houses built for veterans if nail production is dropping.

Right Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Reconstruction and Supply): One reason for production in February being less than in January is that there are fewer working days in February.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh!

Mr. HOWE: My hon. friends, if they will watch production in a 31-day month as against a 28-day month, will see that that is a fact.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): There were twenty-nine days in February this year.

Mr. HOWE: I know, but the short month is the principal reason for the drop in production. The production of nails is limited by the amount of rod that can be supplied from the steel companies. We are stepping up rod production as fast as we can consistent with other demands. Generally speaking there has been a very sharp increase in the output of nails, and generally speaking there is no great shortage of nails in this country, even though it has been found impossible to keep all hardware stores supplied with nails. That is the plain fact. The apparent shortage is a matter of distribution. I know of no project in the country that is being seriously held up for the lack of nails.

Mr. FRASER: I do not agree with the minister's statement that fewer working days in February accounted for the drop in production.

HEALTH INSURANCE

INQUIRY AS TO LEGISLATION AT THE PRESENT
SESSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. STANLEY KNOWLES (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister yet in a position to answer the question I asked him yesterday, of which I reminded him by notice this morning?

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker. My hon. friend's question was as to whether health legislation would be introduced at the present session. The question has been under consideration by the cabinet off and on at different times since the beginning of the session. When legislation will be introduced will depend on the progress we make with other legislation now before the house.

[Mr. Harris (Danforth).]