

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, in view of the forecast by the OECD that the growth rate in Canada will be about 2½ per cent this year, which is well below the growth rate required to prevent the rate of unemployment increasing, does the Prime Minister intend to announce any new measures or is he content with the measures the government is following now as an ample method to cope with unemployment in this country?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to improve on our methods.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister indicate to the House whether or not he or the Minister of Finance will make a statement in the House within a day or two, following these very alarming figures in association with the OECD forecast which indicate a very cruel rate of unemployment in this country? Is the Prime Minister prepared himself or through a responsible minister to indicate to the House precisely what the government proposes to do about this very high rate of unemployment?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants the minister to participate in any kind of debate on this question the minister has assured me that he would be prepared to do so later in the day if the opposition in its use of this day wants to raise the subject.

An hon Member: We will.

Mr. Trudeau: If the House prefers a short answer to this question I am prepared to try to deal with it now.

ENERGY**UNITED STATES POSITION RESPECTING CONTINENTAL POLICY—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON CANADIAN POLICY**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. About two weeks ago the minister undertook to ascertain from the government of the United States whether the statements contained in the letter from the White House signed by an aide to President Nixon represented government policy, particularly the sentence in the President's letter which reads:

The national security of the United States requires the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement with Canada with respect to all energy matters and the imposition of some quantitative limitations on the entry of Canadian petroleum pending the conclusion of such a pact.

I want to ask the minister, now that he has had adequate time, whether or not he has ascertained from the government of the United States whether the sentence I have just quoted represents government policy and what response the minister has made to that?

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this statement was a letter from an aide in the White House to a group of 25 Senators who were objecting to the cut-back in Canadian oil imports. There are patent mistakes in the letter itself as it refers to an insecure supply in eastern Canada when almost 70 per cent of our supply in eastern Canada comes from Venezuela which in another context the United States has deemed to be a secure source of supply. So there is a patent conflict there. We have had no official advice concerning whether or not this represents anybody's view other than the particular aide who wrote the letter.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the letter came from the President's office and indicates that the restriction being placed on the import of Canadian oil is being used as a lever, to use a polite word, on Canada to agree to an energy package policy, is the minister now telling us he has not made any inquiries of the United States government to ascertain whether or not that statement in the letter from the White House represents the policy of the government of the United States, and if he has not made any inquiry why has he not done so as he promised he would?

Mr. Greene: With regard to the particulars of the inquiry, I will refer that to my colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs who deals in such matters. In respect of the question of leverage I might point out to my hon. friend that there was some provision made as recently as yesterday for a slackening of the quotas and for providing extra quotas. If this was meant to be leverage, then it is peculiar that the quotas were slackened as of yesterday.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the statement which the minister made both at Denver, Colorado, and more recently in Ottawa in respect of Canada's energy policy, would the minister undertake before the House recesses to make a statement on motions regarding Canada's energy policy in