

Inquiries of the Ministry

Minister. Have the discussions been concluded which have been going on between Canada and the governments of the United States and British Columbia with respect to the paving of the Alaska Highway and the construction of a road through the Panhandle to Skagway? If they have been concluded, what are the results of those discussions? If they have not been concluded, are the discussions continuing?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I cannot answer this question. I am not aware of the state at which these talks or discussions may be now but I will inquire and either answer or ask the minister to prepare an answer.

[Later:]

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I have an indication that the Secretary of State for External Affairs has an answer to the question I put to the Prime Minister a moment ago. I wonder if he could provide that answer to the House?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the United States Congress authorized discussions with Canada concerning the improvement and paving of the Alaska highway, and officials of the two governments met in Ottawa in June for an exchange of views, largely on technical questions. It was decided at that time that Canada would conduct a survey of the origin and destination of traffic on the highway during the summer months and when the results of that study were available there would be a further meeting.

Mr. Nielsen: That leaves only the question of discussion with the British Columbia government and the U.S. government with respect to a road through the Panhandle to Tidewater. Perhaps that could be answered at some other time by the appropriate minister.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNITED STATES ECONOMIC MEASURES— RENEGOTIATION OF DEFENCE PURCHASING ARRANGEMENTS

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, this is supplementary to a question asked earlier this afternoon by the hon. member for Edmonton West and I direct it to the Minister of Finance. I wonder whether in the discussions with the Americans the question of defence purchasing in Canada has come up? If so, was there any particular request from the Americans that we perhaps re-orient part of our defence purchasing to offset their difficulties somewhat?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, these discussions have gone on for a long time, in fact, as I indicated previously, since last spring, and this is one of the questions that were raised. The Americans indicated to me, and I was told this in general discussions with Secretary of the Treasury Connally, that they felt we had done very well and that this exchange of defence procurement had worked out for us rather better than they would like to see us do in the long run.

Mr. Forrestall: Could the minister indicate whether or not we have in any way made any concessions that would place professional judgment in some difficulty, particularly with respect to a replacement for the Argus? Are we going to buy the Orion despite the professional judgment we have received?

• (3:00 p.m.)

Mr. Benson: No concessions whatsoever have been made or are being considered.

CONCENTRATION ON PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the statement emanating from our embassy in Washington that Canadian ministers and officials are at present unable to focus on such problems as the discussion of energy with the United States, is there any reason to hope that the Canadian ministers and officials are busy focusing on some program to provide massive employment in Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): That is the upshot of what I have been saying earlier, Mr. Speaker. We have other things in mind.

WINTER WORKS PROGRAM—INQUIRY AS TO ANNOUNCEMENT THIS WEEK

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister indicate whether he or one of his colleagues will be making an announcement this week of any employment program for the winter?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): If we are to make such an announcement, Mr. Speaker, I will try to ensure that the hon. member knows of it a little bit in advance so that he can prepare himself to congratulate the government.

Mr. Lundrigan: That is typical Trudeau bunk. Can the Prime Minister answer the question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, I have raised an important question. I understand that Treasury officials have worked all weekend trying to concoct some sort of program. I am asking whether an announcement of that type will be made this week by the Prime Minister or one of his colleagues, and I should like an answer to that very important question.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Moose Jaw.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will understand that the Chair has already recognized the hon.